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THE INTERDICT ;

A NOVEL.

“ Do thou, my soul, the destin'd period wait,
When God shall solve the dark decrees of fate ;
His now unequal dispensations clear,
And make all wise and beautiful appear.”

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE INTERDICT.

CHAPTER I.

“ For still she sang near brae and burn,
How sweet’s the love that meets return !”

A week passed heavily—the quiet of our home was gone ; it did not look like home.

In voluntarily exposing myself to the arrows of Quinilla, I thought myself more valiant than the son of Peleus ; but I longed for moonlight as much as any owl, and caught myself, the third day, while yet the sun was in meridian, instinctively wending to the ruin. I turned my recreant feet and performed penance by offer-

ing to shew Theodore the beauties of the glen ; but Theodore had little taste for other beauties than his own, and could not, for the tenderness he bore his pantaloons, and hessian boots, venture them through copse or pebbly rill : he had, besides, a paternal care for his complexion, and eschewed a sun-beam as if fraught with pestilence. His prowess consequently dwindled in my estimate to a mere driblet. Would one so careful of his skin abide the perforation of a bullet ?—I soon discovered that he thought his *cicerone* a confounded bore, and I rejoiced thereat ; my conscience was appeased ; the hours I would have squandered on him for my aunt's sake, were now, honestly, my own—I spent them at the ruin.

Quinilla, on the contrary, was by a *coup d'amour* affected with a passion for the beauties of creation. She, who had once been as tender of apparel as her brother, now trudged “from morn till dewy eve” through bog and furze-brake, in yellow boots and pink silk stockings, careless of her garments as if they grew upon her back as kindly as the ram's wool. This was Katy's commentary—it angered Mrs. Mul-

ligan, indeed, to see the fragments of the beautiful book-muslin petticoat floating from the thorn bushes, and the elegant lace veil reduced to riddles.

These audible complaints might be esteemed impertinent by those unadvised of Ireland's domestic compact of immemorial date ; a charter which guarantees freedom of tongue to fosterers and factotums of every grade ; they would rather lose their *perquisites* than their licence to bestow advice and "a bit o' their minds," upon occasion. Frankness is, in fact, the staple of their fidelity ; if they do not inflict, at their discretion, remonstrance or reproof, they do not care a farthing for you. They will keep the distance measured by themselves, inviolate—drive them half an inch beyond it, and you lose your hold on their affections. Katy knew her privilege, and stretched it to the limit : she was an old and faithful servant, a family fixture ; she counted herself blood-relation to Quinilla, for she had nursed her ; she joined my aunt in thinking her a beauty, and destined to accomplish a grand match ; therefore she condemned this waste of

muslin and Mechlin on a tramping picture-lad, and would have reckoned it a *thousand shames* to have withheld her commentaries.

I, on the contrary, felt a real respect for the young artist as far as his profession went, which I justly ranked among the nobler callings. His nomadic life was only a proof of his enthusiasm. Apelles might have left his native isle to visit ours, had he but dreamed of its enchantments. Thus I endeavoured to satisfy my aunt, and to vindicate myself for encouraging Sanford's passion, which I doubted not led him daily to the very haunts Quinilla selected for her rambles. I used to watch them from my eyrie, rejoicing in their budding loves. Quinilla, sometimes indolently languishing would seize on Sanford's arm; sometimes innocently sportive would skip like a young kid, to the utter dislocation of "the beautiful book-muslin." My sisters, forced to countenance these appointments, would linger far behind, companions of the sensitive O'Toole, who during scorching noon, never ventured his complexion beyond the shady covert of the headland. In rainy weather our study was

converted into a reception room, and every one of our familiar places became in turn desecrated, for Quinilla now afflicted us with melody ! displaying her terrible proficiency in ballad and bravura. The wilderness where we had listened to the wood-pigeon resounded to —“ Sweet’s the love that meets return ”—our cousin’s voice, perforating a thousand brilliant passages, would glide from dulce to fortissimo, and wake the echoes, scare the pigs, and force the very frogs to leap out of their lurking holes, as it rattled forth “ Bright chanticleer.”—I never shall forget that horrid chanticleer !

Our aunt meantime, stifling her own doubts, intent on gratifying Quinilla, and deaf to Mrs. Mulligan’s misgivings, would task the skill of her factotum to vary the flavour of her standard dishes ; to make the pork and chicken of to-day unlike the chicken and pork of yesterday : there were no supplemental dainties to be had within a dozen miles—Mr. Sanford *must* be asked to dinner, else Quinilla would be *wild* ; and though the dog-days were blazing on our glen, when erst cold meat and salad would suffice us, yet frying pan and spit, now,

were cheated of their holiday, and (harder usage still,) a poor old dog named Breesthough, which turned the spit-wheel (chain jack and bottle jack being yet in embryo,)—I had a compassion for the forlorn turnspit, and, though no painter, I could make a graphic sketch of that mute, patient servitor—he was a lean and liver-colored animal, long backed and short upon his legs, the only sentient thing in our establishment unkindly forced to labour. He would erect himself upon his meagre haunches, fix his disconsolate round eyes on Mrs. Mulligan, and wag his paws imploringly. We used to intercede for him with tears, when skulking from the ominous fowl or joint which Katy had just spitted, he would take shelter between any legs that would protect him, looking so piteous at the prospect of his diurnal motion. But Katy was an obdurate task-mistress—she would seize poor Breesthough by the nape, call him deluding thief and humbugger, contend that he only wanted to be coaxed, that he had a liking for his wheel—He had I think the same affection for it that Ixion had for his,—It roused my ire to see poor Breesthough's

holiday curtailed by our unseasonable visitors—Philosophers may laugh when I confess that the melancholy whine which accompanied his noontide whirl has often brought the tears into my eyes—I one day thrust Pug into his place, at risk of being bitten, and hid poor Breesthough in the hay-loft. Mrs. Mulligan was furious, for Pug resigned his situation, and the meat was spoiled.

Another grievance at this season remains to be recorded. I was obliged to fill my uncle's post at dinner, and help the *company*, an office unsuitable to me as that of turnspit to Pug. I had to bear the acid of Quinilla's sulks, which fell upon my carving, when Sanford disappointed her ; and the sallies of her obstreperous humour when she thought herself adored. Sometimes, in these latter cases, she would, *sotto voce*, repeat to me his whispered flatteries.—I once expressed my wonder that while he spoke to her, he looked at Marion—Quinilla said, *that* was the delicate artifice of love, and I believed her.

Sanford, meanwhile, made friends on all sides ; he was free of every cabin in the glen

his light and fascinating audacity had introduced him.—With Marion's *protégés* he was particularly a favorite. Bill Driscoll liked him for his *genteel* behaviour in dancing with his wife. Blind Johnny listened with less pleasure to his pipes than to Sanford's rattle. The infant beggars knew whom to follow for a silver half-penny; even Katy Mulligan accorded him her patronage from the moment she discovered that he threw away his money like a gentleman, a sure sign, she said, he had a plenty.—My aunt thought otherwise, that light money leaves the pocket and heavy money fixes there—still she liked Sanford, and but for, now and then, a grumble at Fitzgerald's absence, her good humour was abundant as her hospitality—My sisters, too, tired of O'Toole's conceit and coarseness, would resign him to the *shades* and willingly accept the escort of their future cousin, as Quinilla called the lively artist.

But there was one whom Sanford never could propitiate—Grace McQuillan. Her keen brown eye would steadily take note of him, but never twinkle with a kind regard; her curtsy was ungraciously accorded, and to his friendly banter

she would oppose a gravity most disconcerting. She was oftener at the cottage now than heretofore, but her sparkling countenance was overcast. When Mrs. Mulligan would brag of Miss O'Toole's good fortune in marrying a man who made a power of money with nothing but a little brush and a black lead *skiver*, Grace would come in at every pause with an emphatic humph!—" 'Tis throwing cold water on the match," said Katy, "like blowing a fire with a broken-winded bellows."

All this time Fielding seemed neglectful or neglected: he seldom visited the cottage, and when he did he was formal, absent, and embarrassed—He was as niggardly of words as I was, and even with Sanford was laconic and reserved. One day my aunt remarking on his diffidence drew the following corollaries—that as he certainly was not as *free and easy* as his friend he must be poorer; this would account for his glum looks and his distantial conduct—Quinilla had declared that his attentions to herself were quite distressing, until she plainly told him that her heart was given to another—this would account for his low spirits—"And so

Walter," went on my aunt, "the poor fellow is greatly to be pitied you know : they tell me he shares your apartment at the ruin—a convenient thing for him.—I begged Katy to fit it up with all that we can spare to make him comfortable.—Give the creature a shelf in your clothes-press ; his things are huddled into a vallise my brother says—and Walter, do tell him that his dining here makes no difference ; the dumb waiter answers for Slauveen ; Katy doesn't mind another plate or two, and the table set for seven will hold eight."

It was true that Fielding had continued to share my sleeping-chamber at the ruin, although his friend's head quarters were some miles off. I could not help observing that for fellow travellers they were unaccountably dissevered, unless indeed the cause could be discovered in their rivalry ; but my musings on this source of variance always concluded with my wondering how the rest of mankind should differ so widely from myself in opinion of Quinilla.

I had met my fellow-lodger frequently upon the causeway, or wandering along the mole. Though joint tenants of the old oak chamber

we did not warm into intimacy—civil but silent co-partners. He seemed like myself to have a mortal antipathy to long sentences. Thus our acquaintanceship did not ripen kindly; nay, having reached to exchange of opinion on the weather, it seemed frost-nipped. But my aunt had now convinced me he was poor, and crossed in love. I would try to gloss the manner of her invitation. He was slow in receiving my advances, yet I persisted: “His pride,” thought I, “only seeks to ward off obligations which he thinks derogatory.”—I grew animated, and my tongue nobly seconded my earnestness.

Fielding looked at me with some surprise, as if he had all at once discovered in me the type of something rational.—Be it as it may, from that hour we were friends, and at times I have thought that all the sorrows of my after-years were counter-balanced by the friendship of such a man.

He was the disciple of a new philosophy—new at least to me.—Instead of interpreting nature, like *my* imaginative theorists, by devising causes consonant with their own conclusions, he exercised his reason in discovering those

causes, and in establishing their results.—His predominant characteristic was an independent, inquisitive, and penetrating sagacity, which led him to enquire minutely and boldly to decide—His wisdom was practical, operating to search out truth and recommend it ; to investigate the subtle element of mind, and to prove the harmonious adjustment of what is changeable and unchangeable in our sphere of action.—His cool and resolute courage enabled him to combat a susceptibility, tremblingly alive ; to withstand the sharpest trials ; to grapple with prejudice, assert the right, and fearlessly reject the false—His doctrine tended to raise the spirit to a calm supremacy above external influences, and to wield its resources as agents in the service of religion and philosophy. His morality was as practical as his wisdom ; it was tried by the more exalted tests, not caught at random from speculative principles.—Like the features of his countenance, the features of his mind were of the noble rather than of the captivating stamp ; in neither could you discover a trait to favor weakness or to palliate hypocrisy.

These observations of Fielding's character

were not hastily made—they are the result of long experience; during our early fellowship I could not discriminate between learning and wisdom; I was too ignorant and bigoted to give up my crude opinions and old theorists, and enter on the preliminary course of study Fielding advised me to pursue.—It would be the labour of a life, I thought, to acquire even the rudiments of his system: I hugged the dear old folios, my new counsellor would have banished, or at least suspended; and promised them eternal constancy—We differed however without disputing; our friendly controversies were the fruits of our encreasing intimacy. My courage in making a bold stroke to overcome a poor, proud man's fastidious scruples, was rewarded; the eighth place at table was filled by Fielding, and although the brother artists eyed each other at the first rencounter very like suspicious rivals, yet their aspect was in no way threatening, nay Sanford's handsome face lost in a moment all trace of discomposure, softening into an expression of arch defiance, consistent with the exultation of a succesful candidate.

Helen had been present when my aunt expressed her surmises of Fielding's poverty, and had added an energetic "Do Walter persuade the poor man to join us at dinner." The shrinking, girlish, reserve which, combining with her grief for Madame Wallenberg, had made my sister almost mute in the company of Sanford and O'Toole, was dispelled by compassion for the dejected stranger. Those slight unostentatious services which only the refined can estimate were tendered by Helen to the humbler guest; the dumb waiter stood beside her, and Fielding was more scrupulously served than any one; yet her kindness was so modestly put forth that it required a tact as delicate as her own to comprehend it. Quinilla, hitherto, had been seated between me and Sanford, O'Toole between my sisters, but, on the day of Fielding's re-appearance at our board Sanford, by some shuffling, contrived to displace Theodore, who clucked and sputtered on finding himself "*hindered o' dividing the girls.*" I suffered innocently for this change-sides—Quinilla's visage glowed like a setting-sun; she let loose two worlds of words upon my awkward carving

—I grew nervous, spilled the gravy, and by a luckless slip of my fork sent a crackling of roast pork into our cousin's lap.—Her dress was spoiled!—a lavender poplin—and her dismay was horrible! I had a great mind to run off—Marion made bad worse by a sly laugh, at which I almost fainted. The cloud upon Quinilla's brow was charged. My aunt called out for Katy and cold water.—There was an appalling suspension of my cousin's breath: she glared upon the crackling, voiceless!

“What lovely equanimity!” cried Sanford—“admirable!—to look so unruffled, on so trying a catastrophe!”—He threw his handkerchief on the erratic crackling and flung both out of the window.—“A gentleman of my acquaintance,” he continued, coolly resuming his seat, “who was about to put on matrimonial shackles, tried the temper of his mistress by an *artificial accident* of this kind—the lady rated him as if they had been married for a month—she lost her lover and her dress; my friend is still a bachelor.”

“And served her right,” exclaimed Quinilla—“She must have been a mean-spirited irri-

table creature !—No woman with an atom of dignity would lose her temper for such trifles ! —*The:*, dear, do you remember the butter-boat that Dionysius Bullock upset upon my ball-dress ?—I was as cool then as I am now.—Don't fatigue yourself Helen ; the skirt is ruined, but what harm !—There, there, you'll rub it into a hole—Is that a spot upon the flounce too !"—She laughed—I thought it was the oddest laugh !

" Well," cried my aunt, " I give you credit sister ; " I never saw you bear vexations of the kind so well before.—Turn the breadth bottom upwards.—Eat your dinner Walter.—Mr. Sanford did you intend to throw your pocket handkerchief out of the window ?—was that an artificial accident ?"

" Hang your accidents of all sorts, natural and unnatural," cried O'Toole—" I hate um—Wasn't that a *poorty* accident that spoiled my purple pantaloons if you *plase* ! You remember Fielding the last time that you dined here, when I put on my peach-blossoms, and you and Sanford had the row.—We thought you'd never come again !"

"He took wit in his anger, you perceive," exclaimed Quinilla, pertly.

It was the first intimation I had had, that the rivals had actually quarrelled.

"I assure you," she resumed, "I consider it very ungenteel behaviour of you, Mr. Fielding, to worry Mr. Sanford so. If you are eager to be off, can't you go? Mr. Sanford is not tired of us yet!" She cast a knowing glance at the handsome artist.

"There are some features of this glen I would wish to impress upon my mind ineffaceably," said Sanford; "therefore I remain."

He looked so full at Marion that one might have suspected it was her features he alluded to.

"Is it the goblin's pass, or the petrified flood you mean?" said Marion, eagerly; "or is it that grand view which comes upon you all at once when you round O'Sullivan's crag? Or is it that rock above the fall where we gathered those heaths and sea pinks?"—he pointed to a *bush* of flowers, redolent and variegated, which hid the parlour grate.

"I have made a sketch of what has so enchanted me," said Sanford, carelessly; "you shall see it."

"And you *do* think Ireland beautiful!" said Marion.

"What a fool you are!" exclaimed O'Toole—"How should *you* know any thing of Ireland?—Why you never shewed your nose beyond this out o' the way hole!—God help your head! wait till you see Rathcormac, and the Bog of Allan, then you may talk!"

"The bog of Allan suits your poetic inspirations," said Sanford, "but I have only common-place ideas.—Where, Miss Fitzgerald is, to me appears the most delightful spot in Ireland, or any other land."

My aunt laughed, "I am so used to hear the children called Marion and Helen, that I could not at first make out who you meant by Miss Fitzgerald."

"*Children!*" cried O'Toole—"that's too much upon the brogue! what babes they are!—why Walter is *going on* seventeen, and he's the youngest, isn't he?"

"To be sure," replied my aunt; "younger

than his sisters by a year or two—sixteen, years younger than Quinilla.”

Theodore gave out so extraordinary a whistle that every body started.

“You are a little out in your reckoning sister,” said our cousin, who had been accustomed to make a modest deduction of at least six years from her experience.

“Let me see,” pursued my unconscious aunt—“this is the year one thousand eight hundred and fourteen; you were born in—”

“The room is very hot; I’m suffocated;” said Quinilla.

“Then we’ll leave it,” said my aunt. “Walter, say grace.”

Quinilla led the way into the study, apparently so exhausted that she was obliged to grasp at Sanford’s arm.

I had scarcely entered our little library since the memorable wedding-day, when I had read *Antigone* to Madame Wallenberg. The book lay open at the page which had called forth my aunt’s reprehensory ejaculation. Marion approached—“Ah! that was the last thing

you read to Madame Wallenberg ;” she sighed profoundly—“ shall we be as happy as before we knew the Baroness—when our cousin goes ? do you think we shall ?”

“ A difficult question to resolve,” I answered.

“ *I cannot divine how we shall feel when all these noisy people go,*” continued Marion ; “ there are but four, and yet they seem four hundred. Mr. Sanford may make Quinilla as good a husband as William Driscoll makes his wife, so ’tis no great harm to wish that they were married.”

“ William Driscoll,” I repeated : “ did you observe the progress of that courtship ?”

“ Surely did we. Kitty used to assist Helen and me to teach our little weavers ; William was always lurking near the ruin ; Kitty held back, as if wishing to avoid him.”

“ And do you think this love-affair resembles that ?” I anxiously enquired.

“ Marion mused awhile, and cast a side glance round. Helen and Fielding were in deep discussion : Sanford was hemmed up in a corner guarded by Quinilla, who was pouring on her lover a flood of beautiful ideas. “ Do

you think *this* love affair resembles *that*?" I repeated.

"Exactly," whispered Marion; "only that it is Quinilla who plays the part of William Driscoll. I wish she would fix the wedding day, for I feel at times so unaccountably low-spirited. I would give any thing to wake one morning and find they were all gone."

"So would I; but Marion, do you think Quinilla is secure of Sanford's affection?"

"Oh! quite; she told my aunt he worried her to death with love, and squeezed her hand; I don't think much of that however, for he squeezed mine one day—he hurt me, and I told him so; but then he makes such speeches. She repeats them all to Helen."

"Do you think Sanford amiable?" said I.

"Every body thinks him so—don't you?—He bought a flag for Johnny's pipes—he gave William fishing-tackle for his boat—the children are all alive with joy when they meet him. And who was it that turned Quinilla's rage from you to-day? The only creature he seems cross to, is that spiteful pug; he flung it heels over

head into the duck pond because it snapped at me."

"Yet pug is Quinilla's pet," said I; "he should love the dog for her sake."

"I love Grace," retorted Marion; "yet I dislike her cat."

"Were you present when Sanford quarrelled with his friend?"

"No—Quinilla said it was from jealousy."

"And what would you infer from Sanford's jealousy, Marion?"

"That which we all wish for," she replied. "Unless Quinilla marry we shall never get rid of her entirely. Hush! Mr. Sanford has escaped; he will join us in a moment."

I had no opportunity of enquiring how she had divined that Sanford would join us in a moment.

CHAPTER II.

“Haunt of my childhood art thou still as fair
As when I wandered through each green recess?
Still does the soft breeze, with his idle breath,
Stirring at once a thousand twinkling leaves.
Utter neglected music?”

THESE retrospective sketches of my early past have often proved emollients to the rough griefs of maturer years. I look through gloomy passages heartless and discouraged, until some record of days green and balmy meets my eye—a sun-ray striking unexpectedly through a dungeon grating. Oh, wise philosopher, who reckoned remembrances of childhood among wholesome things!

From the incubus pressure of the *toga virilis* I transport myself into my light jane jacket, and *noozle*, as Quinny called it, into each cranny of my boyish haunts. Even the recollected sorrows of those “merry days when we were young” are fever-cooling—soft showers, which refresh the flowers and brighten up the fields. The waves of thought, flow smoothly on, bearing me, joyous, to that blithe age when I began to recollect. I betake myself with new vigor to my desk whenever one of these welcome interludes comes forward.—This blotted note-leaf, peeping from larger sheets, represents me debating with Fielding in the old oak chamber, opposing a school-boy’s logic to his acute, inductive reasoning. I felt the superiority of his principles, but I obstinately repelled conviction, and adhered to that philosophy which, instead of studying nature, was satisfied to guess at it.

Yet no unkindly feeling was excited by our differences. With Fielding my prejudices and weaknesses were added causes for interest and compassion; while I, secretly impressed with reverence for his genius, denied his proposi-

tions, partly from indolence, and partly from attachment to the far-fetches in which I had been disciplined.

But there was one among us who seemed his twin spirit, the substratum of whose mind appeared to have been cast in the same mould. Helen's intellect was expansive: there was a spring and energy about her, indepressible; and a clearness of conception by which she quickly recognized as beautiful and convincing, the mental expositions of our new acquaintance. Her countenance glowed with animation when Fielding would revive before her, our unequal contests. Kindling with his theme he would leave me to my crudities, and enter on the harmonies of nature. The various aspects of the external world, the various aspects of the human mind, their accordance with each other and with *beneficent* arrangement, became to Helen gradually intelligible; her course of reading had been wholesomer than mine, and had better schooled her for the admission of truth. There was no egotism of preconceived opinion to mystify the light of reason, neither was there any educational frippery, misnamed

accomplishment, to obstruct the progress of good sense. At first she was merely an attentive listener, attentive through anxiety to prevent the humble stranger from feeling himself overlooked; but she soon became a questioner, and succeeding days strengthened her faith in our philosopher.

Fielding's moral doctrine exhibited in all its phases perfect symmetry: in its application he evinced deep knowledge of the human mind.— Pure enjoyment was derivable from the due exercise of our higher faculties; the lower, when discreetly used, stimulated the nobler, and contributed also their meed of minor satisfactions. Our vices were ordained to be destructive of ourselves, our virtues the sources of internal peace. To err morally was to court remorse, more or less pungent according to the nature of our sentiments; to transgress physically was to incur penalties proportioned to the infraction of those invariable laws by which the universe is guided and sustained. Thus even prudence or expediency was made to subserve a high-toned morality, an exalted and unshakable belief in the beneficence of the almighty

Legislator. The accordance of this divine government with those exalted precepts, was pointed out, in which the humblest yet the ablest teacher appeals to our nobler principles against the tyranny of self-love, avarice, and hypocrisy; thus demonstrating the capability of man to render these distempered passions subordinate to his higher attributes. Submission was enjoined to dispensations which, fallaciously considered, might appear irreconcilable with benevolence, and obedience was prescribed to those natural laws whose operations no entreaty can suspend. Ignorance was no plea for the infringement of such ordinances; innocence could not mitigate the punishment annexed: the fiat had gone forth which had established 'they were good' and therefore irreversible. Thus was the study of ourselves and of the edicts on whose observance a futurity of pain or satisfaction hangs, imperative. We were not to question the will of the great Designer, as manifested in such appointments; we were patiently to conform to His decrees. Death, the decay of faculties, their failure when abused, evils hereditary or inherent, were the conse-

quences of a state of being in which we should progress, until the ends of Omnipotence were accomplished.

There was yet another member of our little household whose unpretentious, plain good sense had predisposed her to the views of this genuine philanthropist. My aunt's stocking-needle remained suspended while Fielding spoke. At first her honest countenance was only significant of wonder that her poor guest and his embarrassment should have parted company. The matter must be next to inspiration, she protested, that could thus have loosed his tongue. She regarded him with that sort of dread Warlocks are supposed to have created, an open-mouthed ambiguous stare; but her features after a time would relax into profound attention, interrupted by commendatory phrases fashioned in her homely style—'to be sure—I said so myself a thousand times—goodness is no excuse for want of prudence—there's one infliction for breach of the commandments, another for offences against common sense—a man may be an honest man yet break his neck—the vilest rogue on earth

may have the sense to keep upon the safety side—if people run their noses into ruin with their eyes wide open, be they ever so pious, they must reap the consequences; but let them lay it to their own misconduct, not to Providence—I always thought it downright arrogant, for vain, self-righteous mortals to pretend, that the punishment of rashness is a measure of divine grace to their conceited selves, and a just judgment upon those they think less worthy of such chastening favors—who made them judges in a christian-land?—all very well among the Pharisees.’

“You speak with reference to the consequences of our known transgressions,” observed Helen, who, with myself and aunt, formed the audience of our lecturer one memorable morning; “but surely there are unavoidable evils—may not such calamities, Mr. Fielding, become beneficial as correctives, to ameliorate the spirit of the sufferer and lead the mind to Heaven?”

“Every misfortune, submissively interpreted, may become so, but to boast of misfortunes as being signal instances of divine favor, is presumptuous—assuming party-spirit in omnipo-

tence, and establishing a Goshen unattainable by non-exclusives—Many of the calamities, indeed, considered unavoidable, proceed from defects descending by inheritance.”

“True enough !” interrupted my aunt, with a melancholy gesture ; “I have witnessed fatal instances of such calamities ; warnings which make one weep one’s very eyes out !—why such things are, is hidden ; we may as well enquire why this world was made at all ; why some can see and speak, and some are blind and dumb ; but there is healing in futurity.”

“There is,” said Fielding ; “the spirit is incapable of disease, the immortal, immaterial spirit ; but even *here* much of this calamity may be obviated ; at least mitigated.”

“I hope it may, I hope it may,” exclaimed my aunt, with fervor.—“Foresight is wisdom’s root.—At all events such terrible inheritances need not be perpetuated. Open the window Walter, I feel quite in a fever.—That was a merciful interdict which parted the leper from his fellow creatures Mr. Fielding.”

Fielding looked at the excited speaker with blended satisfaction and astonishment. I, too,

had been all along studying the countenance so seldom flushed by philosophic disquisition, satisfied that my aunt's affections, not her spirit of enquiry, led her to discuss topics so unusual. The word *interdict* like the voice of a disagreeable acquaintance made me wince : it seemed a herald of dim evils, starting forth occasionally with incommunicable warning.

"Happy the philosopher," ejaculated Fielding, "who by judicious insight into nature's laws shall diminish the amount of hereditary defect, and abridge the miseries which harass and curtail the life of man !"

"Yet such misfortunes are more endurable than those brought on by wilfulness," said Helen—"The one train of evil may bring with it the balm of resignation, the other must be followed by the horrors of remorse—I could suffer more patiently from other's faults than from my own, I think."

"Very true Helen," said my aunt, "and so could I. The mischief that we could not have prevented is more tolerable than the mischief that comes from one's own folly. Now Mr. Fielding give me your opinion of a case in

point—it is not every body I would consult so freely, I assure you.”—She looked cautiously around and almost whispered—“Now Mr. Fielding, suppose blindness, epilepsy, or some such woful inheritance was transmitted through parent to child from generation to generation, would not one be justified, nay would not one be called on to prevent the continuance of such a mischief?”

“Unquestionably,” said Fielding; “the selfishness which perpetuates such misery deserves the awful retribution it—”

“What in the name of gloom and gravity are you talking about?” said Marion, popping her head in at the window.—My aunt started, and began to disentangle her stocking thread.—“I have been listening with all my might; is Helen giving you a chapter from her favorite analogy?”

“Where is Quinilla, Marion?”

Marion endeavoured to reply, but some ludicrous idea was revived by the mention of Quinilla: her efforts were prodigious to get beyond, “she is,”—a merry-thought would intervene, and almost choke her. We heard

a symphonious titter from some one *en cachette*, and a distant booming of wild glee.

“She is not flumped into the duck-pond, is she?—What *are* the glen-boys hurrooing for?—I feel just like an addled egg—where is Quinilla, child?”

“She is fighting in the paddock—learning to *fence*.”

“To what!”

“To fence,” shrieked Marion, with a fresh burst which we were forced, from very sympathy, to join in—“Mr. O’Toole is teaching her.”

“Do you mean that they are fighting with *real* swords?”—Where in the world did they get them?—Fence!—they’ll stab each other—run and stop them Walter—a pair of nizzies!”

“Don’t be afraid aunt, don’t be afraid; Mr. Sanford put on guards—Quinilla stole the swords out of his case, because her brother told her all the lady-fashionists in London learned to fence.—Mr. O’Toole says there’s no fun on earth to be compared with fighting.”

“’Tis in the blood of the O’Tooles,” observ-

ed my aunt, with sober gravity, while she diligently sought out another orifice in the well-darned stocking. "A family feature—Our ancestors were none of the rabble *settlers* you know Mr. Fielding," (*you know* was a complimentary inference my aunt assumed)—"They were descendants of one *Ogyges*, a great Scythian giant.—It was always a word and a blow with an O'Toole."

"And were the ladies O'Toole as pugilistically inclined?" said Sanford, who now leaned forward on the window ledge.

"Not at all," replied my aunt, with great alacrity—"Soft as lambs unless they were put out of their own way—I cannot imagine what possessed *Quinilla*! She is generally rather shy of danger—fencing indeed!—a pretty trade for women!—I wish you'd call her, Marion—and come in yourself; you look quite flushed."

An outrageous clapping of hands testified the performance of some *coup de main*.—"They come; they come;" said Marion—"let *us* go in."

I could not explain why, but I did not like

to hear my sister couple herself thus with Sanford. They were hardly seated when Theodore stalked into the room clutching his sword as if it were a paviour's mallet—"I'd rather fight with a roasting-spit a dozen times over," ejaculated he, throwing himself into my uncle's arm chair.—"There's substance in that, but this *fouty* spindle-shanked thing! I wouldn't give a button to be stabbed by such a tooth-pick!"

"Nor I," said Sanford.

"I'll tell you what," resumed Theodore; "you may talk as you like, but Quinilla has more in her *nob* than any of you!—bates O'Nail to nine-pence; she's an excellent Richard the Third in the fighting scene.—Quinilla, come in here—give us the speech about the 'bloody deed,' that Monimia Bullock used to spout."

"Spout!" echoed Quinilla, rushing in, and waving her weapon furiously—"spout till you have drenched our steeples—spout, rain, wind, thunder, fire! 'Avaunt!—thy bones are marrowless, and the lights burn blue!'"

“ Bravo, bravo, bravo !” roared O’Toole. “ I never saw any thing like it in all my life.”

“ Blood, blood !” gasped Quinilla displaying the white of her eyes ; “ out confounded spot !”

“ Quinny, Quinny, you’re a jewel,” bellowed Theodore ; “ up to all the clap-traps.” Fielding stared, and Sanford laughed abominably sly behind his pocket handkerchief. “ The roll of your eye is capital Quinilla !—*ancore !* *ancore !*—*Cain* can’t hold a candle to you !”

“ Oh Romeo !” lisped the ductile actress, fixing her dramatic eye on Sanford,—“ Give me my Romeo and I will cut him up in little stars.”

“ Stars ! fiddle sticks !” cried Theodore,—“ what a conjuror you are ! Stars indeed ! he’d come down *squash !*—stick to your cue, your forte is tragedy. Do you remember when—”

“ Music, heavenly maid ! was young,” exclaimed our cousin, throwing herself into a Lydian attitude.

“ When was that I wonder ? Music is a proper old maid by this time Quinny !”

“ You put me out brother,” said our cousin

angrily—"O'Connell's ode upon the passions is a lovely thing; he makes Hope wave golden hair, something like mine."

"Quinilla, pray Quinilla," said my aunt, "put away that frightful sword; tie up your hair, you look so fiery; what *will* Mr. Sanford say?"

"Oh! it was he that put me up to it. We peeped in, as we passed by this morning, and saw you were so prosy; so we thought we'd enliven you a little. What were you studying Mr. Fielding?"

"Ourselves," said Fielding drily, with a keen glance at Sanford.

"And a very proper study Mr. Fielding—quite in my own way—'the proper study of womankind is man,' says Pope—didn't he Helen?"

"Which o' the Popes said that I wonder?" cried O'Toole.

CHAPTER III.

“ The gay Monsieur, a slave no more,
The solemn Don and the soft Signor,
The Dutch Mynheer, so full of pride,
The Russian, Prussian, Swede beside ;
They all may do whate’er they can,
But there’s none that can *fight* like an Irishman !”

I WAS heartily tired of this noisy flippancy. There was no hope of a return to rational discourse.—My thoughts were bent upon escape; but Quinilla’s eye was active; her mood was juvenile as any kitten’s; I was not light of foot, and durst not venture to attract her notice by the slightest movement. She might address me as her Romeo, or force me to render up a pound of flesh; in her poetic frenzy she was

capable of any freak that might shew off her versatility of talent.

My aunt, finding the mock combat had ended so innocuously, bustled off to hear whether her messenger had returned with a letter she expected from her husband.

"My uncle may be here to-morrow," said Helen, and she too left the room. Her remark seemed to affect the remaining party variously. Marion, after ejaculating "how glad I am!" fell into a reverie—Sanford and Fielding looked at each other as if instinctively. Quinilla's playful flutterings were suspended.—Theodore, making himself comfortable by lolling back and planting his feet upon the chair my aunt had just vacated, drawled out—"By our ancesters and so am I Miss Marion; 'twill put an end to all this dilly-dallying at any rate."

I thought this speech unblushingly significant, but it produced no consequence. Sanford might not have comprehended the polished phraseology.—"I too am glad," said Fielding; "our worthy host will have our thanks, at least, before we leave the glen."

“Who do you mean by *we*?” exclaimed Quinilla, sharply;—“are you going to run off with Marion?”

“To run from her would be safer,” replied Fielding, coloring almost as deeply as my sister.

“Oh! you’ll die a bachelor as sure as fate, a fusty bachelor—You and Walter can keep shop together—superannuated ’prentices!—we give you up—Marion need not set her cap at *you*.”

“Miss Fitzgerald should rather be exhorted not to set her foot upon the necks of her admirers,” said Sanford; “she seems more inclined to coldness than to courtesy.”

I had been reddening with rage at the previous impertinences, for Marion’s eyes were brimful of tears; but this speech somewhat appeased me, particularly as I perceived our cousin now, was bridling and broiling to my heart’s content, while she kept up an intermittent giggle by way of manifesting indifference, balancing the sword upon her foot the while, which action shewed to advantage her pink silk stocking.

“*Lave* off your bickerings,” said O’Toole, yawning; “I like a battle-royal, but I hate a rumpus—give me that sword *Quinilla*; I want to chuck those gags off.”—He removed the guards—“There, now fight like a *Gla-di-a tor*, if you fight at all: squabbling is only fit for filly foals—How deuced sharp the points are !”

“Like some people’s wit,” exclaimed *Quinilla*, spitefully.

“*Bah !*” said O’Toole, “have done I say; fretting spoils one’s complexion; I never fret for a less thing than *grazing* a new coat. Give us a shake *Quinilla*; you shake as well as *Catalana*—Give us ‘the brazen trumpet sounds.’”

Quinilla’s swell and ruffle were instantly becalmed; she stretched out her slender neck fixed her eyes upon the ceiling, and struck up ‘the soldier tired,’ quavering in such a piteous fashion that I found myself from pure astonishment forced into a hysterical laugh, exceedingly painful, because it combated with a strange propensity to weep which for the last hour had possessed me. The sound of my own mirth appalled me; I was totally unconscious that it

was a laugh till Quinny said it was. The demi-semi-quavers ceased, and, with a withering look, our cousin rose—Mr. Sanford is this to be endured!—do you permit a puling boy to insult me!—a raw non-entity!—Look at Miss Marion too—who gave you leave to laugh Miss—I'll not bear it—I'll not submit to it! Resent it Sir."

"Madam," said Sanford, a questionable flickering playing round his mouth; "*déar* Madam, I dare not interfere; you have a worthier defender,"—He bowed to O'Toole—"one who can, without presumption, resent your wrongs."

The nervous hiccup which acted on me independent of my will, still kept up an intermittent bubbling: I could no more repress it than I could keep my heart from throbbing at the fright it gave me. Quinilla became furious; her words were spurted like a *feu de joie*, a disconnected pop, pop, more abundant than intelligible. "Go on and prosper—Mind your hits—Hop-a-kicky—humdrumpedant—B from a bull's foot—game leg—impudent brat;" was *my* share. Sanford came in for random shots

—"Pretty lover—much of a muchness—sit by and see me jeered at—spirit of a cat—drop into a decline—fragile form would feel it."

"Quinilla," cried O'Toole, expanding his pale eyes, "only tell me; are you in earnest, or are you only acting? for I'm a kitty-noodle if I know!"

"It is time to put an end to these mistakes," said Fielding, rising and addressing Sanford; "your conduct, to say the best of it, has been equivocal; you interrupt the harmony of a peaceful household; your attentions to this lady are misconstrued; whether you meant to lead her into error is uncertain, but it is very certain that she is deceived. Mr. Fitzgerald returns to-morrow; your explanations or mine must be made an hour after he arrives." He bowed and wished us a good morning.

My hiccup stopped at once. It was all up with poor Quinilla; the least astute of us was suddenly enlightened.

"Why which way does the wind blow now," exclaimed O'Toole, who had been whispering a whistle during Fielding's peroration.

“Blow!” echoed Quinilla, “it is a blow!—Dupe! am I a dupe!—a laughing stock!—am I?” she vociferated marching up to Sanford.—“Answer!—Out of my way Miss Marion; I don’t want *your* condolence; ’tis pretty clear what *your* wheedling ways have brought about!—Answer me this moment, Sir—am I jilted, or am I your intended wife?”

The last word seemed to run like electric fluid through every fibre of the astonished artist; he looked in such an innocent amaze as ill became a perjured lover. I tried to move towards my sister, who stood trembling and gazing at our cousin with a half stupified expression, but something more effectual than iron gyves braced me to my chair.

“Speak!” cried Quinilla—“answer me this moment, Sir.”

“My good woman,” began the bewildered looking youth.

“Woman!” shrieked Quinilla, “do you dare to woman me!—I’m not a woman; I’m your betters, and you know it!”

“Assuredly,” said Sanford; “therefore I

never entertained the presumptuous hope—I never even hinted at obtaining the honor you allude to.”

“Paltry evader!” cried Quinilla, “did you not dance with me, and walk with me, and praise me for the beauties of my mind?”

“One might dance or walk with a lady, and dwell upon the beauties of her mind without presuming to make love to her,” said Sanford.

“’Tis all the same in the Greek,” exclaimed Quinilla! but I see who has betrayed me—a chitty-faced hypocrite!—You loved me once, you know you did—Why did I refuse Mortimer McCarthy! Oh! Theodore, Theodore, had I stayed with Mrs. Bullock, I should not have been here to-day!—What am I now?—a poor, deluded, broken-hearted, abandoned young creature.” She fell into a chair, and then into hysterics.

Theodore during the strange dialogue had been looking unutterable things. At this appeal he put his arms a-kimbo and strutted up to Sanford; his ears projected awfully—

“Do you mean to say that you don’t mean to marry Miss O’Toole?”

“My dear friend I never thought I should have been forced into refusing so extraordinary a favor; so utterly beyond my merits.”

“Hold your humbug,” cried O’Toole,—
“Answer without flummery. Don’t put me into a passion; I’m dangerous!—Is it your intention to diddle *my* sister, Miss Quinilla O’Toole, out of her affections?”

“Heaven forbid!” cried Sanford. “I never formed the least design on such rare treasures.”

“Then you’re a scoundrel,” said O’Toole.

Sanford bowed with perfect self-possession.

“*Lave* off your gentility, or by the powers I’ll decant it out of you,” cried Theodore, snatching up a sword. “I see you’re a poltroon, and so I’ll give you one chance more.—Do you mean to marry Miss O’Toole?—yes or no. We want no parleyvooring nor palavering—Do *you* mean to *marry* Miss O’Toole?”

“It wounds me to the heart,” said Sanford.

“I told you so,” cried Theodore; “you see that he can’t answer a strait question like a

gentleman. You'd better not put me in a passion!—Do *you* mean to *marry* Miss O'Toole?"

"No."

"You don't, don't you!—Haith! that's coolish—may be you may change your mind my jockey!—First we'll take care that nobody comes in for snacks." He locked the door and threw the key out of the window. I began to feel alarmed, but Sanford's humorous expression and a suspicion that O'Toole's menaces would prove mere bravado reassured me.

"Now my gentleman," resumed Theodore, "neither you nor I will stir out of this spot until we give each other mutual satisfaction."

"Satisfaction!—for what?"

"For making my sister fall in love with you—what else?"

"A novel insult; still it shall be answered; but not here; not in a gentleman's house, before ladies, without seconds. Let us postpone—"

"Postpone!" roared O'Toole—"is it *put* off you *mane*?—Give you time to run away!—how soft you are!—Did any one ever hear of an Irishman postponing his satisfaction with a

sword in his hand and a *flook* of a foe overright him?—You want a backer do you?—There's plenty of us by, to swear to fair play—Here, handle your toothpick; you shall have the first blow—take it I tell you, and run it through my body, or by the head of my godfather, I'll run it through yours!"

Sanford took the sword, poised it lightly, threw it up, and twirled it with the perfection of *sang froid*.

"Come on," exclaimed O'Toole griping his sword and throwing open his waistcoat;—"no flourishes; strike any where below my chin; if you stick me in the face I'll strangle you, by the Pope I will!"

Marion turned pale; I rose—"For Heaven's sake—"

"Do not be alarmed," said Sanford, laughing. "The thing is too absurd; I can disarm this blustering fellow without—"

"What's that you call me?" said the Irishman, lashing himself into a fury—"say it again—dare it!—Do you *fellow* me, you trumpery, pettyfogging, sneaking, sniggering, sign-post manufacturer!"

“Bravo!” cried Sanford; “rage has lighted up your intellect.”

“Are you throwing a stigma upon my understanding?” roared O’Toole.

He rushed to the opposite side of the room—I thought to see him vault through the window, but he turned abruptly and calling out “Have a care! I’m going at you,” clenched his sword as if it had been a carving-fork, and made a run at Sanford, who, though not anticipating this extraordinary method of attack, stood on his defence, and would have parried, but that Marion caught his arm.—The mischief was irretrievable—O’Toole, equally regardless of my efforts and exclamations, as of his adversary’s sword, which grazed his shoulder, pressed forward with the home-thrust of a giant, and sent his weapon through the body of the unfortunate young man, who fell with a deep groan,—Marion fainted—I stood lock-jawed and shuddering, hoping I was in a dream. The blood which spurted from the wound brought forth the piercing shrieks of Miss O’Toole—The whole household thundered at the door—I saw the crimson torrent glide beneath it—I

grew sick—the room swam round, while I vainly tried to reach the door. My feet were in a pool of blood—Marion looked as lifeless as poor Sanford—The horrid dizziness encreased—I stumbled and fell.

CHAPTER IV.

Not in the breast most promptly bared
 Trust be reposed !
The vacant house is pervious,
 The full stands closed !
To one elect breathe wearily
 Thy untold fears :
The whispers of three confidants,
 The world's ear hears !
 Frithiof—Strong's translation.

“ *Ochone ! Ochone ! Acushla agus asthore machree !** You're crushed downright entirely poor child !” such was the piteous address which recalled my senses. “ Grace,” I exclaimed, “ did I dream it ; is he dead ? ”

“ Only next door to it *agragal*,” said dame

* Alas ! alas ! the pulse and beloved of my heart.

McQuillan ; “ small harm ! why would he be purtending to poor ugly Miss Quin ! Get up darling : here’s pretty murther in a peaceable house and the good man out of it : when rogues an’ fools—”

“ Let me know the worst Grace—is Sanford dead ?”

“ There’s nobody dead yet, *machree* ; which is very remarkable when you look at all the blood-shed : while breath is left we wo’n’t give up.”

“ Where is Marion ?”

“ Come out o’ this slaughter-room Geraldine ogue ! make haste ; they want help up stairs ; your sisters are together—come away—the misthiss an’ Mr. Fielding are with the dying man.”

“ Dying !”

“ Come away I tell you—come this way.” She helped me through the window and I thus escaped half the horrors of the scene.

“ Go change your clothes ; I’ll be wanted soon ; ’tis now we miss Slauveen an’ Lanty !—Katy is off to Ballygobbin for the doctor—but that gentleman up stairs is worth a host o’

physic—go child—go to your lodging in the ruin yonder ; I'll bring you comfort soon."

" Let me see poor Sanford ; just for a moment Grace."

" See him, an' you as tender as a new-laid egg ! we have more patients than enough already ; people shouldn't keep whining an' keening, but handling their wits while there's life in the *corp* ! Ah darling ! if you had been playing single-stick instead o' blinding yourself with heathen books, tishn't a little drop o' creature blood would knock you down that way." She left me hastily.

I took my way across the causeway, half assenting to the condemnatory judgment manifested by the tone of Grace ; instead of helping in cases of emergency I was found to be an added burden : the veriest youngster in the glen was a hero to me. " Am I really a coward ?" said I. A plunge and gurgling noise made me turn my head : it was Breesthough struggling in the water ; he was as sorry a swimmer as myself, had a horror of immersion, and eyed me piteously as he floundered from the causeway ; I jumped in, caught, and landed

him with some difficulty.—“ Had I had to dive in fifty fathoms I would have done the same,” thought I, “ therefore I am not a coward.” The dog shook his long drooping ears, his only personal attraction; rubbed himself upon the grass and capered: he had escaped from the portentous spit (freighted with a Michaelmas goose) by the sudden withdrawal of his arch enemy from the kitchen; and I doubt much whether, if he could, he would not have blessed the accident that gave him liberty to scamper after me, filling him with such amazing gladness as blinded him to the breaches in the causeway.

Instead of changing my wet clothes I threw myself upon my bed; the transported Breesthough looked at me with ludicrous inquisitiveness, as if demanding “ Why don’t you feel as glad as I do? sure Katy Mulligan is gone to Bally gobbin!” In other circumstances I would have enjoyed the animal’s extravaganzas, but now his yap and caracoles offended me. “ Down Breesthough!” Breesthough coiled himself obediently, and with a happy sigh surrendered him to sleep.

Solitude has no palliative for the reproofs of our offended monitor: if Sanford died I should impute his early fate to my want of firmness: in vain I urged my inexperience to excuse me, the confidence induced by Sanford's careless manner, and my suspicions of O'Toole's courage: I found behind the varnish of these exculpatory arguments selfishness, credulity, and indecision. It was true the unruly Irishman had barred all hindrance from the household, but the slightest signal from the window would have summoned a dozen stalworth arms to pinion the assailant: the tragic *denouement* indeed had been too sudden for prevention, but why did I permit the feud to go so far! "why," I repeated in agony of self-upbraiding, "because I hoped that Quinilla's pathetic sobs, (which were never intermitted during the dispute,) backed by Theodore's threats, might have had some effect on Sanford, and thus the poor young man was sacrificed."

These reflections brought on paroxysms of bitter self-reproach: I had been blind to every thing but the accomplishment of the one prime desideratum, the getting rid of Quinilla: the

form of Sanford, pale and gory, haunted me! I who had never killed a fly without remorse, had been accessory to the destruction of a fellow creature.

The day declined; I grew insupportably impatient: Sanford was dead, therefore I was forgotten! Grace found me burying my groans in my pillow—"Are you bent on encreasing our troubles?" said she angrily.

"He is dead Grace."

"He is *not* dead: if he was, 'tis God's will! edged tools won't be blunted because fools choose to play with um, and this Theodore O'Toole when his blood is up, is the most mischievous tool that was ever invented. I could have told you what stuff the Bagoorah is made of;—real Irish—we warned dame Mulligan over an' over again—half a score of our boys called after him 'Whiskers,' one day; O'Toole turned round an' tumbled um down as if they were skittles, or castles o' cards."

"We thought him a cowardly fool," said I; "he used to complain of a gnat bite."

"'Twas for the blotch on his beauty God bless you, not for the pain," replied Grace

“ he has plenty of *heart*, though his brain to be sure might be of the wrong sort ; but the greater the folly the greater the fear ; when a fool’s in a rage there’s no fraction o’ sense to get cool upon ; we needn’t call council however to find out how the mischief was done ; the matter in hand is how to mend it. You’re hungry—I have brought you a morsel o’ supper sir.”

Grace had unloaded a basket and arranged its contents ; I dared not encrease her displeasure by avowing my horror of food, so I feigned to nibble, while Breesthough gulped down, with noiseless rapidity, the bits I pretended to swallow. My dismay had augmented, for on examining the face of my visitor I discovered that she had been weeping, and Granny Mc Quillan was not one to weep for what could be remedied ; Sanford’s case was hopeless ! But even this contingency, terrible as it was to *me*, did not adequately account for the dark scud which flitted occasionally over my companion’s countenance, or for the anguish expressed by the involuntary clasping of her hands when she thought herself unobserved. I remembered

that, in the first instance, she had treated the affray as the merited result of the young artist's levity, and had expressed her apprehension of his fate with stoical composure: Grace tried to talk off the suspicion evinced by my enquiring looks; she replied with elaborate detail to my questions concerning Sanford, but testified merely compassion for his sufferings.

"'Tis a critical wound as ever I nursed," she observed, "clean through an' through! no hacking:—'twas never meant that men should battle with swords; a bludgeon is handy to every one: herbary ointment will mend the rap it gives; but to be blowing up furnaces for old Nic inventions that runs through a body's invisible entrails like skivers through fowls! who can come at the case?"

"But the Doctor can pronounce on the danger."

"He won't be here before midnight" said Grace; "Katy is mortal stiff for a messenger: wek eep the thing quiet; our boys might be for murthering O'Toole; that Sanford was more to *their* mind than to *my* mind!"

"Marion said every one liked him, poor fellow!" said I.

The dark scud again passed over Grace's features—"A loving heart leads one astray," she ejaculated;—"the crosses he'd laugh at, would build up her gravestone! there's wailing at hand! may the death cry be raised not for her, but the *sassanah*!"

"Something dreadful has happened," I exclaimed; "tell me the worst; *I will* see my sister."

"Stop Sir," said Grace in a tone of authority — "t is hands that can help them they want, not hands that are wringing in sorrow; there's no room in that house for lamenters. Your sisters are safe—I told you so—stay where you are Sir: bear up like the rest—be bold—be a man."

How often in after trials has, "be bold, be a man," come between me and womanly weakness!

"They are safe" I repeated, "and——well?"

"Who could be well with such mischief abroad? there's some o' them better than you are however:—what a color you've got! a fever flush!—lie down love: I'll sit a wee bit on the bed-side and tell you a story."

She placed herself near me, turned the tail of her gown over her cap, rolled up her arms in her apron, and rocked herself gently. Brees-though laid his nose on her knee, heaved a contented sigh and complacently wagged his stump of a tail. "Well," pursued Grace relapsing into the familiar style of our Irish chroniclers, who make, 'well' and 'you know' their prelude and accompaniment. "Well Master Walter ;—are you hearkening Sir? once upon a time, it might be two or three *hunder* year ago, since the great O'Sullivan Bear—you're not listening Sir."

"You have nursed many wounds Grace ; did you ever cure as bad a case as Sanford's?"

"Not many indeed," replied Grace, resentless of the unkind interruption ; "yet I've dressed broken heads scores o' times, an' spliced broken limbs—I cured one or two pike-cuts in the *rising* o' black ninety eight, the year o' the bloody rebellion you know ; you hadn't your wisdom-teeth then darling."

"My father took a part in that rebellion," said I, won to attention.

"Bad advisers *ahashka!* before them con-

speeracy times Lord Gerald could match with the best in the land; many's the quality maid had a mind for him."

"He married Madame Wallenberg's niece," said I.

With a gesture of surprise Grace ejaculated, "so you know that the Baroness is your own blood relation! we thought you were kept in the dark: 'twas the wee shanashee o' the Wallenberg family, Berga Schmidt, and good luck to her that gave *me* a hint of the *sorrow tale*; *Ochone! Ochone! it dried up my joy! Berga remembers like yesterday, how your father an' your uncle came to Wallenberg Castle, and how both fell in love with that beautiful Julia; the angels above might consort with her, Berga said."

"And she married my father!"

"She made that mistake sure enough; it isn't the best of us have the best brains: the Baron was angry enough: but the Baroness couldn't say 'no' to her niece."

“Baron Wallenberg would have preferred my uncle for Julia.”

“The Baron misliked her to marry at all you know,” replied Grace.

“How selfish!” said I.

“One might think so indeed, for when Julia was willed to that nun’ry, her fortune, you know, was will’d to his first-born son: your father however was for nothing but love an’ the lady; wouldn’t ask for the lands! he had enough of his own, just then, to be sure; but Berga maintained that the Baron was by no means a close-fisted *gurthough*,* only staunch to the will of his brother-in-law—had many a *tiff* with his wife on the matter.”

“Generous woman!” I exclaimed.

Grace shook her head—“The Baroness was blinded by love for her niece, just like Madam Fitzgerald, who never mistakes but in thinking Miss Quinny a beauty you know;—had *I* been the aunt, sooner than see her a wife I’d have planted the sod on her grave.”

I was thrown off my guard—“For what reason” said I.

* Anglice *hunks*.

Grace started and eyed me suspiciously.—
“ You *don't* know the reason then !”

There was no evading the shrewd inquisition of the eye turned sharply upon me ; I confessed I was only aware that Julia Derentsi's father had prohibited her marrying—but—”

“ Pooh !” interrupted Grace, “ is that all ? what harm is *that* ? who knows but the man might been hampered to death with a vixenish wife like Miss Quinny you know, an' so he resolved that no other good man should be hampered to death with his daughter ; may be he married into some cross-grained family, and might think that the mother's sour ways would go down in descent—often they do indeed ! look at the Cooneys, what vixens they are from the bothered great gran'mother 'down—if she had been hindered o' marrying what a power o' plagues the world had missed, an' the husbands besides, misfortunate *Boochals* !—then again there's the Carthy's—not a quiet *colleen* for fourteen generations ! whenever Bess Carthy flies out like a fury the neighbours remark, ‘ 'tis kind mother for her sure.’* ”

* That is, “ the mother before her was just such another.”

I saw through this shuffling, and through Grace's abrupt assumption of carelessness, but I knew her too well to hope she would impart what she might think it wisest to hide. "After all," resumed Grace, patting the turnspit, who seemed a rapt listener, "after all one is quite as well single; this dog and my cat might be joined in wedlock with just as much comfort as other ill-sorted couples I've seen—why there was my own share o' mankind—Jock McQuillan you know—a passable husband enough of a holiday; a pious man too, except in his passions—Yet I never knew what a scalded heart was, before Priest Macnamara consorted us. There's Bob Ryan that lives near the Cairn above, when he was a bachelor you never lost sight of his teeth for the grinning he kept—if he dare shew 'um now they'd be shoved down his throat!"

I listened with indifference, satisfied that the hidden mischief would not be made palpable by Granny McQuillan. "No, no," she continued, "we want no conjuring-key to find out that wed-lock's a lock, a good many would pick if they could."

“ You forget my aunt and her husband,” said I.

The indefinable lowering again wrinkled Grace’s prominent forehead. “ And how do you know but the thorns are rife which soon will be rankling the Geraldine’s heart?—there’s wo and distress to the wedded, even when they love one another—’tis bitter to weep for our own grief, but ’tis bitterer far to weep for the grief of him we love best!”

I eyed her wistfully; she began to reload the basket—“ You will cause me to grumble if you preach up the blessing of singleness, Grace; remember I have *two* wives.”

“ Sweet angels!” she cried, abruptly intermitting her task and clasping her hands, “ is the undeserved lot to befall them?—Will you seek for no other love sir? will you be watchful?—mark my words, Master Walter; let nothing divide you; give no heed to lamenting; them that yielded to tears repents of it bitter enough!—remember *my* caution; let nobody wheedle your sisters away—keep together I say—the bird that first flies the nest is the sorrowful bird.”

“*I* at least, could not fly far,” said I, forcing a smile.

“Don’t jeer, Sir; the tempter might come; our glen is no longer the lonely glen; the Geraldines might be divided—but remember my words, that day will be rueful to all of you—’tis late, Sir—I’ll fresh up the bed for you.”

“But Grace, why do you anticipate events so improbable?”

“Think so if you wish them to happen, Sir—shut your eyes upon all but your books. Can one read the day long, an’ be up to devices, an’ glances, an’ wheedlings, with no one to watch but a gull that thinks every heart bleeding for love of her?—the foolish old *Girsha*! Your sister is left to the arts of the scatterling while you are inditing your Greek—will heathen-books help you to earn a bittock when want’s at the door? there’s poor scholars enough in the land without *you*.”

I was mute from astonishment,—to what did this preamble on poverty tend? Grace proceeded—“When distress broke upon us, Miss Helen didn’t fall to her books but her brains!—There’s another too—do you think

that the man who lies down on this bed," (she was arranging Fielding's) "do you think he sees nothing but Greek with his eyes? would that make him handy to wounded an' sick, *shasthone!* not a bit of it—Get rid of your gibberish, Sir! it dries up your eyesight—Keep one eye to spare for your sisters at any rate; it isn't on ugly old spinsters young men waste their time."

I groaned; she had strengthened a tormenting suspicion.

"There, there," went on Grace, "don't despair—'tis misprision o' providence. I'll bring you good news at the dawn—go to bed—'tis your softness that makes you so useless, poor child! Won't you bid me good night, Master Walter? 'tis angry you are."

I held out my hand—"What a throb in your pulse! I wish there was some one to watch you—Mr. Fielding can't sleep here to-night—lie down love—I'll put a nice mug of whey in your reach! you'll have Breesthough for company;"—She smoothed down my coverlid, placed a rush squab for Breesthough, and left me. My blood was indeed at fever

heat, it was obvious that Grace had intended to prepare me for some disaster unconnected with Sanford's, and that during our interview she had hovered between contradictory fears. I heard her cautiously return and draw the bolt of my chamber-door; excitement surmounted the lassitude which oppressed me; she had left me no light, but a waning autumnal moon lent a pale flood of radiance, through favor of which, I groped to my closet and let myself down by the ivy ladder upon the mole.

It was a cold, raw night, heralding October. As the keen air saluted me, I felt a singular revulsion, an aguish trembling affected my parched frame—still a kind of delirious energy helped me onward.—The entrance to the cottage was carefully secured. I recognised the precaution of Grace in this arrangement—my sisters' chamber was unattainable, but opposite my aunt's a part of the cliff called the table-land, used by Katy for a bleach-ground, projected towards the house, and from this point I could pry into the apartment.

The curtains of the bed were closely drawn; a solitary candle glimmered on a table—Field-

ing stood near it intently gazing at his watch : beside him, white as the white curtain of the bed, sat my aunt. To see a pale, thoughtful face look wan and wo-stricken is not startling ; but to see a plump, florid, merry countenance, bloodless and gaunt, frightens you ; the busy play of features had settled into rigid sternness ; the bustling activity prompt in expedients had ceased ; the frame seemed stiffened—it was so unlike my aunt !—I longed to see her move, to be convinced she was alive. At length she drew a letter from her pocket and fixed on it a stupid stare ;—had horror at the late catastrophe quenched the delight she must have felt at the prospect of the return which I doubted not that letter heralded ? She gazed at it as earnestly as Fielding gazed at the watch : there was something terrifying in these moveless figures ! in the picture which my imagination sketched of the yet more rigid form the bed-curtains concealed. I could better have borne to see my aunt's face blistered with weeping, to see her hands raised in the bitterness of complaint ! I blamed myself for being well, even while my temples throbbed with

fever. All were transfixed with consternation—yet I was well! The stillness grew appalling! I should have added to my imprudence by unguarded ejaculations had not Helen entered the chamber: she placed a salver on the table, took the letter, thrust it into her bosom, forced my aunt to swallow the contents of a cup, and vanished. Her movements had been so swift, so almost winged, that I had not time to note her countenance: it seemed to me as if she had snatched a few moments from some more important care to minister to these night-watchers, and that in her hurried exit there was anxiety and fear—where was Marion?

I descended from my post of observation, stole round the house and looked up to my sisters' chamber; a light gleamed through the window curtain—the night was calm—I could distinguish voices—a few words reached me: they were harsh and violent—and then a faint scream; it seemed half smothered. I lost all prudence and called aloud; but the sounds above grew turbulent and drowned my voice: “It is Quinilla,” I exclaimed, passionately,—

“she is tormenting my poor sisters—it is Quinilla!” These words I vehemently reiterated as I darted over path and causeway, with a speed induced by the paroxysm of fever. I reached the ruin and flung myself upon the bed—shivering and consuming thirst assailed me—I gulped down the beverage left by Grace and opened my hands to the compassionate lick of Breesthough; the dog was found next morning pawing my burning cheek with a sorrowful moan.

CHAPTER V.

Childhood's dreams

Long hushed, start up as waking into truth,
And in this ear soft whisper, with a sound
Familiar, as it were a sister's voice.

FIELDING was bending over me when I unclosed my eyes with the first glimmering of consciousness; I raised myself upon my elbow and stared around. "I have had such a dream," said I, "I must get up. What a horrid dream!"

"It has made you feverish," replied Fielding; "swallow this—it is not yet time to rise—compose yourself."

I obeyed through sheer weakness. From that day, though I recognised what passed around me, yet I felt no inclination to renew

my attempt to rise, to make enquiries, or to oppose my attendants, Grace and Fielding, who in turn, or together, watched near my bedside. I was passive as an infant: my nurses were keenly observant, but they never stimulated me to exertion, never questioned me: if they conversed with each other it was of the trees, of the birds, of the bay; a low quiet monotonous dialogue, which amused without exciting me. They were neither sad nor cheerful, and but for their assiduous attention to my wants I should scarcely have known that they considered me an invalid—As to myself, I neither experienced pain nor anxiety—languor it is true pervaded my frame, but it was rather pleasing than depressing—I enjoyed without drawback the luxury of restoration to comparative health, for memory was asleep: I felt as if the date of my existence had just commenced; like a nursling endued with faint consciousness, I fed and lay down at the will of my dictators.

I was considerably advanced in convalescence before memory began to awaken; far from exciting it to action it pleased me to persuade my-

self that the images induced by my confused recollections were the consequences of my indisposition, and that as strength became renovated, so would the judgment, which should correct these seeming illusions. Although many of the half obliterated impressions of my childhood were restored, yet there was a chasm which I made no attempt to fill up. As a proof of my apathy I supplicated but once for a book; my request was not noticed, and I readily fell in with Grace's device to amuse me with the intellectual game of jack-straws.

At length I left my bed, and was permitted, leaning on Fielding or Grace, to saunter up and down the apartment: they would not suffer me to approach the window, and I was too happy to contend—Johnny's throne was the first object that caused a discordant sensation;—had I dreamed of the closet beyond?—was it possible I had climbed, in reality, the height I had so often scaled in my sleep? I sat down before the rude chair of state and considered it intently; my ideas became entangled; I looked around; the scene of the bridal fête was renewed.—

“Where’s Sanford?” said I, abruptly interrogating Fielding, who was viewing me earnestly—“’tis the wedding-day, is it?”

“You must sleep and get well before you are fit for a wedding,” said Fielding.

I lay down submissively; Grace took her spindle and I closed my eyes to the changeless buzz which had often been my sedative. But sleep would not obey; memory was welding her chain, and swiftly but rashly restoring the links; my train of abstraction went busily on; the process was too trying for my still feeble judgment—bridal and funeral, wedding garb and winding sheet, were woven together; Quinilla was now a wife, and now was arraigned for murdering Marion—I started up, uttering a stern rebuke; Fielding echoed my words applying them to Breesthough, whom he reproved for having disturbed me; I stroked and comforted the guiltless animal; Fielding commenced a soporific dialogue with Granny, and I fell asleep.

The exercise I had taken induced long and profound repose: it was night when I awoke. A wonderful revolution had taken place in my

feelings and ideas ; I was perfectly collected ; without any exertion of my will past events were presented to my mind in orderly succession, up to the day made memorable by O'Toole's defiance ; but my illness and the incidents of that day were so connected that I could not accurately determine whether they were ideal or real, whether I had dreamed of, or witnessed them. The stillness was only interrupted by Breesthough's audible respiration, yet I did not believe I was unwatched : a rush-light in a wire lantern was placed in the cavity beneath the ponderous mantle-piece, throwing lines of a reddish, lugubrious glare upon the mutilated heads of saints, popes, and martyrs, huddled within the chimney : outside this golgotha the gloom was impenetrable ; I could just discern between the intervals of patch-work in the window frame, the shining ivy-leaves made visible by a silvery lustre. I felt a longing to rise, with an instinctive terror of being controlled ; Breesthough's loud breathing prevented my distinguishing any other ; I raised myself—no one interposed—our provident Granny had equipped me in a comfortable in-

tegument ycleped dressing-gown, of her own manufacture, thus superseding the inconvenience of shifting cumbrous habiliments. I reached the window and removed one of the numerous patches that obscured it; the night was clear and frosty—I looked towards the headland, and became, at once, sensible of the length of my confinement; the trees were naked which when I last beheld them, had displayed a vesture brilliant in autumnal tints. My recollection of the harrowing adventure that had caused my illness was now too vivid to be charged to fevered wanderings: Sanford was dead!

A slight rustling startled me; the lantern was removed from the chimney and was borne swiftly towards my bed—"Walter, Walter!" was repeated breathlessly—"Helen, my dear Helen!" Had we been parted for years we could not have embraced with more exuberant delight; and yet we wept. I dared not make enquiries; if Helen had had good news to communicate she would have proclaimed it instantly. "What an age since we have met!" at length I faltered.

"I saw you every day Walter at the begin

ning of your illness," replied Helen; "but they would not permit me to pass the threshold of your chamber while your fever lasted—we have suffered grievously! poor Quinilla! we hoped to see her married, and we credited the mere suggestion of her vanity. It was a selfish error, and justly punished."

"By life-long remorse," said I; "the image of that unfortunate young man will haunt me; did he die peaceably Helen?"

"Die!" repeated Helen, "do you mean Mr. Sanford? he is not dead."

"Not dead!" I ejaculated, "then I am the happiest being in the world! the very happiest! nothing shall annoy me now! Oh Helen I am so happy!" Helen pressed my hand and tried to speak, but a sob which seemed to burst from the heart's-core prevented her.

"Marion?" I gasped, "answer me."

"She has been ill Walter, but she is well now;—we are all well," added Helen sighing bitterly; "all well; and longing to have you with us once more."

"How we shall rejoice!" said I.

"You are sanguine," she replied, "I must

forewarn you—my aunt is changed ; such misfortunes—all together—”

“ Misfortunes !”

“ Enough to upset even her vigorous mind,” pursued Helen ;—“ that horrid scene ! her brother a murderer perhaps—your illness—Marion’s—my uncle’s absence—”

“ My uncle not yet returned !”

“ Business of moment detains him.”

“ He is dead,” said I, “ or Madame Wallenberg is dead.”

“ You are for killing every one,” said Helen, with a faint laugh. “ But I came to nurse you, not to talk ; thank heaven I have no disclosure to make so grievous as you surmise : you must sleep Walter, else Mr. Fielding will not consent to my keeping watch a second time.”

“ Fielding !” I ejaculated ; “ the preserver of my life !”

“ And the preserver of his friend,” added Helen ; “ the comfort and stay of my poor aunt ! Ah Walter ! while there was a question of your recovery she gave up her best aid under Heaven.”

I felt thoroughly remorseful ; the illness

which had left my family desolate had been brought on by my own imprudence :—was I always to remain a thing of tremors and nervous panics, giving way to impulses a woman had learned to control ! Though Helen said nothing of herself, yet I saw she must have braved these accumulated distresses with a heroism which had given her strength to act : had she yielded to puling sensibility what would have become of Marion ? even now it was evident she restrained herself from imparting some calamity considered too trying for my debilitated state. She presented my midnight anodyne ; I requested she would take some repose.

“ I have already slept,” said Helen ; “ Grace will relieve watch immediately : you need not tell me to be careful Walter ; a fresh source of anxiety might kill my aunt.”

Thenceforward, to the time of my complete re-establishment, Helen relieved guard, or shared it in the oak chamber : she had none of that prudery, misnamed delicacy, under favor of which sensitive young ladies evade the duties of a sick room ; her benevolence was active, her sympathies were generous ; she would bind

up a wound rather than weep over it : there were too few efficient helps in our household to sanction the indulgence of interesting reserve. Helen, the most retiring the most innately modest woman I ever met, never paraded bashful scruples to extenuate omissions in social or domestic duties ; never permitted sentiment to interfere with principle ; she lost nothing of the reverence due to woman by her contempt of such false delicacy ; there was an innocent simplicity in her character, a trustfulness in her manner, which even the gay fashionist was forced into respecting. From the conversations I overheard between her and her fellow-nurses, I found their attendance on the cottage invalids had been indiscriminately apportioned, and that Helen's arm was as frankly tendered as dame McQuillan's to support the wounded artist when stouter aids were occupied elsewhere.

I was duly informed of Sanford's amendment ; my own went on apace, for I was invigorated by the hope of removal to the cottage : although the conveniences of such an arrangement seemed obvious, yet it was never hinted at. I could not apprehend that O'Toole after

the late transaction had retained my apartment ; probably he was gone—And—'spite of all my efforts to be generous my heart fluttered at the supposition—perhaps Quinilla had gone with him ! I was averse from mentioning this man ; he operated on my fancy like the raw-head and bloody-bones whose threatened appearance used to frighten me in baby-hood—the mere thought of him revived the horrid qualms I had experienced at the result of his intemperate attack, and I now cautiously refrained from touching upon subjects which might bring on excitement and relapse. But in proportion as my retrospective spirit was kept down, so did my spirit of observation keep on the alert. I diligently noted Helen to gather from her countenance the measure of the apprehended evil ; but Helen's schooling in fortitude though short had been effectual ; reverses were met, with a steady equanimity astonishing in one so young and inexperienced ; the natural tears drawn forth at our first meeting were soon dried up ; her accustomed vivacity indeed, had settled into an even, placid, seriousness ; but there was neither gloom, nor sigh, nor hurried excla-

mation, to set the mind of the observer upon the rack of doubt. Between her and Fielding a quiet, confidential intercourse seemed established; each consulted the other with unembarrassed freedom. The force of Fielding's character gave energy to Helen's: his lessons had imbued her with higher views and interests; in becoming more admirable she was not a whit less loveable; there was the same blushing simplicity, the same diffidence, the same unstudied delicacy which had always marked her character: she had loftier aspirations but not purer, more fixed opinions and clearer aims, but not kindlier; her enthusiasm was modified not destroyed.

Among the little community of the old oak chamber there was one blest without alloy; I venture to affirm, that Breesthough would not, if he could, have bartered his brute nature, limited span of being, and the elysium his long holiday bestowed, for our higher faculties, more protracted life, and less intense enjoyment. The animal lost all his claims to pity; he grew fat and saucy; his begging tricks and humid eyes, his doleful whine and tail deject-

edly pensile ; all his interesting attitudes and habits existed only in remembrance ; whichever lucky chance prevailed, whether Katy thought her slave had fled the settlement, or that she had laid aside her rod of office, substituting boiled for roast as most convenient, certain it was that Breesthough had continued unasailed.

Meantime my forecasting of some dire mischance was deepening ; days past, I was nearly well, took exercise upon the mole, and yet no visit from my aunt or Marion ; no hint of my removing to the cottage ;—nay, a turf-kish had been added to my furniture, the skulls of my golgotha ejected, and a fire established in the chimney-vault by our indefatigable Granny. I thought my self-control heroic, for I made no comment ; but my pulse betrayed me ; Fielding looked alarmed ; I stammered something of suspense ; he drew Helen from the room, and I saw them slowly traversing the causeway, and seemingly in serious consultation. My attention was so engrossed with trying to interpret something from their gestures that stealthy footsteps entering the chamber were unnoticed.

"Bounce the cobbler!" cried a voice: the elegant phraseology was sufficiently indicative; to turn and recoil were co-instantaneous.

"Why how skeered you look; as green as a goss lettuce; between spoony and wishy-washy," exclaimed O'Toole. "Stop shaking man; do you take me for a bugaboo? What a pippin sneezer of a thing you are!"

He gathered up the skirts of his coat while he was speaking, and threw himself upon my bed, heaving a satisfied grunt, extending his huge joints, and eying their bony angles with complacency.—"'Tis the first comfortable stretch I have had for many a long day," he continued; "they made me lie *cugger-mugger*, in Kitty Driscoll's cabin, cooped up in a scrimp of a settle without a night-cap or a bolster! My hair is ruined—look at my skin—What an object I am!—the smoke was enough to destroy any man's complexion!—How glum you are—have you a tongue in your head man?"

"Well," he resumed, after a short pause, "I'm more free than welcome I suppose—we'd draw *rason* out of a real man, but I care no

more for finikin things like you than for a jack-snipe."

"We accord in one thing perfectly," said I,—"in our opinion of each other."

"Speak plain, dang it," retorted Theodore; "I hate to have to guess at a man's meaning—it makes me bilious—are you for fighting or formaking friends—shake hands—you won't—don't—hang the news I'll tell you then; there's the dickons to pay, but mum's the word; they'd play randy with me if you fell back into the fever."

I pretended to be occupied with Brees-though, who had slunk between my feet; his recollections of O'Toole doubtless had revived the bondage of the dog-days.

"There's the dickons to pay, Watty, I assure you—don't be frightened can't you—things are so bad they couldn't be worse indeed—don't turn so white man—Katy says they keep you in the dark for fear of murthering you. Now that's not fair thinks I—I'll give the poor *shingawn* a splink o' light says I—so here I come, like fee-faw-fum." He flung out his ponderous arms and yawned contentedly.

I tried to keep down a gurgle in my throat—
“Helen assured me that Sanford has not materially suffered from your murderous attack.”

“Suffered from a flea-bite,” interrupted O’Toole, “fudge ! you’re a perfect *gommul* Watty ; with all your Greek and Latin you know no more of life than just a cock-roach ! What do you *mane* by murther man ? I’ll tell you—cutting a man’s throat when he’s asleep, sticking a body in the back when he don’t see you ; that’s the signification o’ murther, man alive.”

I turned away fretfully.

“A *poorty* fuss indeed they made about the touch I gave—just nicked a little vein or something. Laura screeched as if she saw a corpse. I was sorry enough for her and Quin the *cratures* ! but I knew well myself, the hole that tooth-pick made, would fill up in a frog-hop.”

“Do you pretend to say that Sanford’s life was not endangered ?”

“Is it in danger you *mane* ? not a bit of it—the *googawn* of a doctor swore it was—I swore it was not—‘the vital parts escaped by a miracle,’ says he—‘what does it signify by

what a thing escapes if it does escape ?' says I. ' I bet you three tenpennies,' says I, ' and that's as good as two and sixpence, he's walking in a month or two,' says I. ' Wasn't I right ? wasn't he walking yesterday ? wasn't he throwing up love-sand and sheep's-eyes at somebody's window ? talk of a man dying of a pin-hole !''

I could scarcely believe this folly was sincere, and looked at him suspiciously.

" The butcher that killed the ram o' Darby might wonder at the blood upon my conscience ; but, bless you, Watty, I saw as great a flood from nothing but a lancet. I saw more than that, I saw the Irish giant, Hugo Samson, run through and through with an iron spike a fathom long that he fell out of a window on ; and he lived to ninety eight ; *there's* for you !"

" In 'spite of all these miracles," said I, " you are lucky that you were not tried for murder."

" Bah !" said Theodore, " Brelyer Barry was your fosterfather ! I told you before what murther meant : if you die in your own defence man you can never be hanged for murther,

but only for manslaughter; didn't I tell him not to put me in a passion? didn't I give *odds*? didn't I open my waistcoat to give him the first touch? Don't think I'll let him off so easy though—I'm longing to be at him—I'm longing to give him a *rambasting*, with a ten year old tormentor, something that will soften a bone at any rate?"

"Then you are a brutal ruffian," said I.

O'Toole half rose, dropped his lower jaw, and opened his great globular eyes so wide that Breesthough bounced back and barked at him. "Did you say that in earnest or only just to show your bravery my boy?"

"If you assault that man again," said I, "you are a brutal ruffian."

He started from the bed, clenching his fist, but in approaching me he tumbled over the turnspit, which, in trying to run away, ran the wrong way—"I tell you what my man," said Theodore, rubbing his knees and resuming the perpendicular; "'tis the best day you ever saw that we are cousins of some sort—look at that window if you *plase*—by my critical powers I'd pitch you out of it, and that vagabond dog

upon the back of you, with all the pleasure imaginable, but for our relationship. Never mind it though—*your* beating shan't be lost—I'll give it on the double to that sniggering jockey; it shan't be lost I promise you; I'm nursing an oak-twig for him!"

"No one but a savage like you," I exclaimed, "could think of renewing the horror of my poor aunt; *you* sorry for your sister—*you*! you have no affection in your nature."

"The divil I havn't! and what made me risk a double-breasted waistcoat as good as new I'd be glad to know?—wasn't it affection for my sister?—what spoiled my best coat and velvet collar but affection for my sister? the cloth can't be matched, and all round the arm-hole is dyed a dirty purple!—don't you call that affection for my sister?—to have a *shuper-fine*, bottle-green cloth dished and done up by a *fouty* pin-hole of a wound! if it was even a glory-mark itself—Sanford has a fine red scar to shew. No affection!—*Bathershin*!—what cramp^c me up in Kitty Driscoll's settle without a bolster? what makes me longing to pound Sanford into stock-fish? affection for my sister

isn't it? me! I'm as soft as a feather-bed and softer; we like remarks indeed!"

I examined his countenance again, to be assured this absurdity was not put on; but he looked doltishly sincere. "The head is hollow," thought I, "except where it is occupied by besotted vanity, blind rage, and a scantlet of what he calls family affection."

"'Tis kind father for me to be fond of fighting," went on O'Toole; "Dad was always at logger-heads with somebody: our ancesters were heroes to the spinal marrow; didn't my own great uncle by the mother's side face four vagabond thieves one moonlight night in his own baek parlour with nothing but a bread knife? didn't he squinch the life within 'um before they could cry 'bolt' to one another? warn't they so struck of a heap they couldn't drop, but there they stood upright as pike-staffs, dead as dried hake, till they were marched off to be hanged next morning?"

No remark was made upon this veritable exploit which had been touched on, as Cork news, once before by Slauveen, without indeed the marvellous addenda. O'Toole rubbed up

his whiskers and viewed himself devotedly in the fragment of a looking-glass. "Do you think I look the worse for my confinement Watty? *you* look abominable! *quaky shaky* like Mrs. Hurly's head on Hammond's marsh!" He glanced over his shoulder at the glass, with a self-enamoured smile, slid forward, and bade me observe how well he walked a minuet.

Breesthough stared at him, cocking his head inquisitively.

"My chitterlings are rather crumpled," resumed Theodore: "they used my cravat stuffing to stop the blood—what nonsense that was now!"

I began to listen with satisfaction, inferring from the idiotic babble that no serious misfortune could have happened; but I did not as yet thoroughly understand this genuine *lusus naturæ*. One virtue was conspicuous in him—sincerity—he had no secret sins; there was as little leaven of astuteness in mind as in physiognomy—he termed *humbug* that which most men termed reason, and *vice versa*:—if he wandered from the point that brought him to the ruin it was through folly not perversity: he

had not wit enough to *intend* a plot : his flashes of brotherly affection, to which I trusted, were literally flashes, puffed out by the hurricane of some inordinate propensity. He had also a glimmering sense of honor as connected with what he termed bravery, but it was the undirected instinct which keeps the stag-hound from trampling the whelp. These flashes and glimmerings however awakened a hope that he was not completely callous, that he could not perform baboonish antics before a looking-glass if things were so bad that they could not well be worse !

While I was meditating, O'Toole also was reflecting ; he tried the effect of his impressions on the conscious mirror in various modes, and at various shades of distance, shouting at intervals broken stanzas of some vulgar ballad, the burden of which was ' delicate Darby O'. His contortions at last became so hideous that the turnspit raised a strenuous and lengthened howl, running round and round the object of his terror as if fascinated : the noise was unbearable, I stopped my ears, but my eyes were now saluted by another apparition—Katy Mul-

ligan, puffing through a mutilated pipe and stuck between the door-posts, glaring at the turnspit!—I never felt the full force of an honest stare till then—O'Toole had too much devotion for the image he was worshipping to note Breesthough, who, lulled by the sounds himself was making, heeded not his ancient enemy, but kept wheeling round the centre of attraction. Katy changed from *dumb-founded* to irate; she stuck the pipe into her apron-string, stole forward, and Breesthough was hanging dingle-dangle by the nape before he could address a prayer to Jupiter. No other tongue but her own sweet vernacular could have furnished Mrs. Mulligan with one tithe of the expletives she showered on the turnspit, shaking him at every soft address as if he were a mop. Breesthough dared not utter a complaint; he crossed his poor fore-paws, wagging them at me imploringly; but I knew the temper of his task-mistress too well to think that interference would benefit the petitioner.

“Why then is that *you* Katy Mulligan” cried O'Toole, turning from himself to Katy—
“’tis time for you to think of one—just look

at me—isn't this a sweet condition of a man ! wasted to a mammoth ! crimped up in a settle, without a bolster, for fear of being nabbed for nothing ;—are they satisfied, at last, { their tender skinned young man won't die this time ?”

“ Small harm if he did, so 'twasn't an O'Toole that massacred him,” said Mrs. Mulligan ;—“ a sore heart to him, and you too, for a couple o' brazen-faced deluders,” added she, addressing Breesthough with shake the fifty-first, “ to be prowoking one to swear in this way. So 'tis nourishing yourself up you *wor*, you sneering, ill-looking, crooked-legged, squinty-eyed, snaiking, thraipsing, shag-eared, disgraceful, unnatural baste ! an' I wasted to the bone with grieving after you, as if you *wor* a beauty : an' *you*, too Master Walter, dwindled to a 'natomy ; all changed from spectres into skeletons !”

“ Will you answer a man's question, Katy Mulligan and leave off jowering ?” said O'Toole, spreading out his palms with pathetic earnestness, “ am I to be coddled like a Kerry-pippin in a smoky cabin until doomsday ! am I hung-beef ! am I a kidney potato, the better for being buried, am I ?”

“They’re afraid to trust you with the painter. Misther O’Toole : he’s getting on limberly, but he’s not quite ready for a sound baitin’ yet Sir ; you’d best go to Cork to see the Master Sir.”

“So I would, Katy Mulligan, if my linen was washed.”

“We’ll send it after you,” said Katy, “we want you to take these duds to the good man.” She stuffed Breesthough’s head under her shoulder, and unrolled her apron—“There’s a letter some where or another if I haven’t swallowed it.”

“I thought Fielding was going,” said O’Toole ; “you’ll choke that dog, Katy Mulligan.”

“*He* going !” vociferated Katy, “and what’s to become of us when he’s away, for the love o’ the pope’s leggins—The Ballygobbin doctor is no more to compare to him, than a duster to a damask napkin !”

“Or cow-beef to staggering bob,” added O’Toole.

“What keeps my uncle so long in Cork ?” said I, hoping to be satisfied at last.

“He likes it may be,” replied Mrs. Mulli-

gan ; “ mightn’t there be a fair, or a show, or a sale, or somethin’ ? Pat Croony wants a sturk or two.”

Theodore shut his left eye fast, and shot a glance at me, intended to be knowing, “ What a whopper, Watty !”

“ Here’s the letter at last ; you’d best be off at once sir,” observed Katy ; “ I’ll send over to Bill Driscol’s and cram the things into the pack—Come along you dowlas-hearted *vagabone*,” she continued, again griping the nape of the forlorn turnspit.

“ You’ll choke that dog, Katy Mulligan, as sure as ever John Hobbs was choked.”

“ Don’t every thief hang by his own neck ?” retorted Katy ; “ a crooked disciple ! wasn’t he nigh distroyin’ me ?—a brute that I brought up myself—choking’s too good for him ; to be hidin’ himself up the *chate*, o’ purpose to keep me in a twingle-twangle.” She was striding off, but turned round abruptly with a censure of her own forgetfulness—“they sent me to tell you that Miss Marion is coming to see you, Master Walter ; but the sight o’ this discreditable villain drove the brains bang out o’ me.”

I was too overjoyed to find fault; poor Breesthough, finding I would not interfere, gave himself up for lost, and heaved a sigh so doleful, agitating gently his scanty portion of a queue!—my heart was melted.—“Leave the dog here until to-morrow,” said I, “only till to-morrow Katy.”

“Are you draming o’ digging up diamonds, to be for humoring the lazy *galoot* that way Sir? how *flawhoole* of your pity you are! what do he deserve, for making me b’lieve that he was *massacred* along with t’other boy?” She clutched him still tighter, and I saw the animal borne across the causeway, oscillating, to and fro, as he was swayed by the vigorous arm of Mrs. Mulligan.

“Well now what thumpers some people can tell!” cried O’Toole—“a sale! Pat Croony wanting a sturk! we give you the bush Katy Mulligan for making short cuts—deep as a bog; I never was up to such twists and turns; ’tishn’t in me.—Why Watty, the short and the long of the upshot is—but that’s true—can you lend me a clean shirt?” I pointed to my trunk impatiently—O’Toole stuffed his pocket and re-

turned to the window—"Why Watty the short and the long—well, see *that* now!—if that's not Helen and Marion just upon the causeway: we don't want to meet Miss Marion any how: she could quit her wounded *leedy* bird at last, she could—the back of my hand to her!—I'll be off to Bill Driscol's in the boat Watty; we're *obleeged* to you for the shirt my man."

CHAPTER VI.

“The cause is secret, but th’ effect is known.”

I FELT an unaccountable tremor as I watched the approach of my sisters ; it was tardy, or my impatience made it seem so. I left the window and threw myself into a chair ; my sane resolution to keep self-tormenting whims at bay overborne by a fool’s remark. Grace’s hints of Sanford recurred : had Marion’s visit been indeed delayed by her devotion to the wounded man ? We had been *all* to each other—Marion, Helen, and myself—from various circumstances I had been led to consider our fates inseparable ; that we belonged to each other exclusively, and

that the party who should permit a different tie to supersede that natural, strict, and grateful bond hitherto so all-sufficient, would incur some terrible responsibility. Was Marion already alienated? I was prepared for a change in person, but was she changed in mind?—how slowly she came! perhaps she regretted leaving Sanford! Her arms were around my neck before the last conjecture passed away.—“Walter, my own dear Walter!” Her rapture at our meeting was expressed with her characteristic fervor and enthusiasm; she questioned me through sobs and laughter. Helen, colorless as marble, stood fixedly observing her, while she burst into these alternate rejoicings and complaints. I forgot my recent causes for disquiet as I looked at her: Marion was neither changed in mind nor person: the thousand questions a thousand times repeated, expressive of the fondest interest, the piteous exclamations at my altered aspect, spoken with that peculiar idiom, in itself persuasive of affection, satisfied me of her undiminished love. I scrutinized the beautiful face; there was as little change in that; where were the lustreless eyes and pallid

cheeks I was prepared to see?—my transient glimpses of myself had detected the ravages of a protracted illness in the sunken visage and attenuated frame—but Marion's eye and cheek were brighter than before! Helen's greeting had been fond and solemn; Marion's was fond and joyful: Helen had addressed me with guarded seriousness, her sister was all openness and volatile confidence, answering my enquiries without a shade of hesitation or reserve.—She was quite well, had never felt so well; poor aunt though was downcast, but then the sight of Walter would cheer her up again: she could not think what kept her uncle; perhaps he had gone over to Germany with Madame Wallenberg—Mr. Sanford was recovering—if the Baroness would come back and I would look a little better she should not have a single thing to wish for. It was Mr. Fielding who had prevented her seeing me before: he was a sullen man that Mr. Fielding—wished to send away Mr. Sanford before he was half cured!—but then aunt and Helen liked him, so she supposed she must like him too.

It is impossible to picture her vivacity; I

perceived that she had been kept as ignorant as myself of what related to my uncle.

Helen, meantime, silent and moveless, continued to observe her sister as intently as if our joint lives depended on her words. Though dissimilar in form and complexion there had been striking points of resemblance between the sisters: this resemblance seemed all at once obliterated: the elder, Marion, had always looked the younger, and illness, so far from having lessened this appearance, had lent to her an added tint of juvenility: her animation was electrical; it bordered on the flights of thoughtless childhood; while Helen's graver deportment took from her extreme youthfulness, and a shade between melancholy and seriousness impressing her features, gave them the character of mature experience.

At length I ventured to name Quinilla. Marion started; a singular expression superseded the flashing animation of her countenance—"Quinilla," she repeated, "I hate her! don't you?"

"No," said Helen, advancing, "Walter does not hate Quinilla; he is tired Marion, he should

lie down now: come, you have to visit your blind minstrel."

Marion reflected for a moment; a moodful expression stamped her countenance as she enquired whether she might come again to-morrow.

"Aunt wishes to come to-morrow," answered Helen.

"Then we can come together," rejoined Marion quickly.

"If Mr. Fielding thinks that Walter will not suffer from so much company."

"Mr. Fielding!" repeated Marion. I fancied that she looked scornful and angry. Helen took her arm and they left me.

The joy Marion's presence had diffused went with her: I tried to fix my thoughts upon her artless expressions of tenderness: it would not do; something too vague for thought to pierce would interpose and baffle my attempts at self-illusion. The more I pondered the less I doubted her attachment to Sanford; her dislike of Fielding, her bitterness towards Quinilla, were deducible from this new-born affection; Fielding wished to separate the lovers, therefore

he was censured; Quinilla had been the cause of the attack on Sanford, therefore Marion hated her—Hated! could Marion hate? could a sentiment foreign to her nature be so suddenly engendered? Marion's arch malice, her bantering drollery, in their highest effervescence were arrested by an appeal to her affections; the tear would start, and a thousand earnest kindnesses would redeem her levity—"I hate her don't you?" was ringing in my ears. Still more perplexing were the look and tone which gave this sentence its peculiar force; it was not uttered from the half-sportive impulses which had formerly led her to exaggerate her expressions of dislike; it was pronounced with the deep intensity which the sentiment inspires in its bitterest action. It was true that, in common with us all, Marion had disliked Quinilla, but *hatred* was a feeling so unsuited to the object; our cousin was a silly not a wicked woman; in her most extravagant perversities Quinilla could be considered as, simply, an annoyance; she had not sufficient intellect to authorize hatred: it was not the spirit of evil but the spirit of distempered vanity that had

caused the lamentable affray ; even I, her particular butt, and the subject of her vulgar caricature, *I* found it impossible to hate her. To drive off unpleasant reflections I determined to force my ideas into a different channel, by entering my long neglected rookery.

The mere sight of it restored my bibliomania ; a cranny of my own, in which I could abstract myself from every body, had in it something of reviving—I was ‘ Monarch of all I surveyed ’—I and an old crow who seemed bent on disputing the sovereignty : my *penates* were as I had left them ; my books, my writing apparatus, my lock up in the window-seat. The gift of Madame Wallenberg was the most obvious treasure of my crypt, I looked at the portrait and started ; the resemblance to Marion was even more striking than I had thought it on a former inspection ; I hastily replaced the medallion unnerved by the same unaccountable horror which had before assailed me, and began diligently to write a memorandum of occurrences, carefully abstaining from dwelling on my own desultory surmises.

In my eagerness to chase away annoying

thoughts I had omitted to replace the curtain, and Grace McQuillan's quick, firm, step was recognised before I could remedy the error. Finding the outer room untenanted, and perceiving a void which, as she had never noted it before, she inferred had been wrought by some energetic *open sessamum*, with 'save you kindly,' she advanced into my sanctuary. Her commentary was short, and illustrated by an expressive shrug—she hoped I was not laying in a fresh stock of unprofitable *lingo*, but learning something solid which might turn to account upon a rainy day. This half condemnatory, half expostulatory apothegm was rendered still more forcible by a sly kick which she bestowed on Strabo, whom her bustling entrance had jostled from his shelf. She had favored me with homilies of this character before, the scope of which so taxed my comprehension that I had given up guessing at it. Her quick eye reconnoitred the appurtenances and arrangements of my hiding-place, while she silently unpacked her dinner basket. I thought of Breesthough as the limb of a *roast* chicken was paraded. Grace continued taci-

turn, her brows were knitted closer than was customary, and her usual encouragement, "pick a bit *cushla 'sthore*," which used to form the zest of my repast, was churlishly withheld. It was the first time in my life that I had seen Grace McQuillan idle, and in a *real* ill-humour; her knitting or her humming-bird (the pet name for her distaff) hitherto had always filled up the spare moments of attendance, but to-day there was no touch of sociability; no yarn spun out good naturedly to protract my meal; she stood with her arms crossed, provokingly respectful. At last I ventured to address her—"Why are you so wrathful at my books, Grace?"

"We thought, Sir, you had left off consort-ing with those roots o' laziness; the Madam says they're full o' knaves that teach one just to filch an' murther! fine examples! fit enough for tithe-proctors.—Didn't Berga tell me that *Jarmany* was sacked last year by the very ditto of your ancient thieves: he cuts your throat, says Berga, an' shoots you, an' calls himself deliverer; distraining lawful tenants, an' putting in unlawful tenants of his own; pretending

all the while he came to help the harvest ! The Baron and his son, thrashed him bravely an' sent him into limbo ; he'll come again Berga thinks if they don't hang him. Purty rogues for copy-books !

The welcome digression from irrelevant topics to the Wallenbergs, gave me hope of luring Grace into the *sorrow tale*. "These German Barons truly are brave gentlemen," said I, "so they drove out this aggressor—did Berga ever tell you Grace, that Baron Wallenberg had a daughter ?"

"She might and she might not : eat your dinner Sir." This was a stroke definitive : I wound up my repast with one solitary remark ; it was on Theodore's fool-hardiness.

"We're not all born with peaceable minds no more than with supple fingers," said Grace drily.—"The bucket can't draw up what's not in the well :—we should mend ourself, and make allowance for our neighbour." She left me with no other farewell ceremonial than a second kick at Strabo, which, had the geographer been there in the flesh, must have crippled him.

Fielding had casually observed that Sanford

would occupy my chamber at the cottage until his removal could be accomplished with safety, and that after the late event all communication between him and me must be constrained and awkward ; my impatience for his departure was heightened by the day's occurrences, and I felt indescribably enlivened when, during the evening visit of Helen and my friend, this departure was spoken of as decidedly arranged.

I slept soundly on this opiate to my cares ; no homicidal faces, multiplications of O'Toole's, gibbered near my pillow ; no jealousies of Sanford quickened my heart's throb—he was going !

I awoke with a floating consciousness that something pleasurable had happened, and watched the rays of dawn creep along the chamber-wall, impatient of their tardy march—Fielding still slept—I wrapped his cloak around me and descended to the mole. The sharp frosty atmosphere, which in my desponding moods made me shiver, now braced my nerves ; I walked at a brisk pace up and down the mole, noting the wintry aspect of the landscape : the heath of the opposite mainland presented a bleak and blossomless outline ; the fern was gemmed

with hoar-frost; a light breeze lifted partially the streaks of mist that obscured the deeper features of the glen, forming them into mountain draperies which the early sun dappled capriciously: the bay, curling into little billows, began to twinkle; I sat down upon a rock overhanging the creek which sometimes harboured William Driscol's boat, to observe more leisurely the filmy vapours rolling upwards; rocks started forth at intervals, then seemed to melt into appearances threatening and shadowy as the ghosts of Ossian.

I was so intent upon identifying those ethereal cloud-forms with Fingal and his host sweeping from the hills of Moilena, and so unprepared for beings palpable and earthly, that I gazed upon two figures emerging from a dell upon the mainland, expecting to behold them float upwards and evaporate. A narrow channel only intervened between the islet-crag I occupied and this romantic dell, which nestled Driscol's cottage; but the vapour still hung upon the valley so condensed as to hide the cabin-roof and to mistify the figures of whose substance I was dubious. The shapes became less question-

able as the sun rose higher. Two other persons now emerged and joined the former ; they advanced to the water's edge and all four jumped into a boat : it pushed off making for the island. I watched it with that intuitive uneasiness which is often the precursor of something disagreeable ; Sanford and William Driscoll were the rowers, their companions were females enveloped in hooded cloaks, one of which by its peculiar fashion I recognised as Grace McQuillan's : the cowl of the other was thrown back displaying the chubby face of Kitty Driscoll. The females landed ; the boat was veering to the creek beneath my jutty : I slunk away to avoid a person for whom I felt almost antipathy, excusing to myself this unfriendly conduct by inferring that Grace had brought breakfast, and that Fielding was expecting me ; but from the winding path which led to the front of the ruin, I descried my friend speeding over the causeway, and I rested against a buttress debating whether I should join him. A pair of hands pressed against my eyes startled me—"I was resolved to come you see," cried Marion, "I was resolved they should not stop me, Walter ; so I

gave them the slip under cover of Granny's cloak ; luckily William's boat was moored beneath the headland : we crossed the bay to Kitty's cottage, and then we all got into the boat again, and here we are."

Her old laugh so low, yet so in earnest, wound up her account of this adventure.

" ' We ' and ' all , ' " said I, " you are ambiguous dear Marion."

" Misty like the morning," she replied, " but we shall both clear up. Why Walter by *we* I mean dame Driscoll and myself—Kitty is always with me now, a spy on Mr. Sanford I suppose." There was a spice of bitterness and irritation in this remark—she resumed—" I was bent upon the frolic, and forced Kitty to consent ; she bargained however that we should flit over to her cabin and make William of the party—think of my eluding Granny's sybil eye ; nay stealing the witch's cloak for passport to the headland ! Mr. Sanford was waiting for us there ; he was no great help in rowing though poor fellow ; his wound is scarcely healed ; but *I* can paddle on occasion, and Madam O'Driscoll pulls an oar you know, and

steers a boat as well as your old Trojan pilot. The bay was dark as Katy in a scowl when we set out, and like a liquid sun-beam when we landed here."

There was such genuine frankness in Marion's look and tone as she prattled in her old artless way, such confidence that I would admire the device by which she had outwitted those who would have kept her from me, that I could not censure her: her manner too—I knew not how—was more in accordance with my wishes than it had been the day before; the slight tremor of her accent was increased, rendering her unutterably endearing; she evidently attached no importance to this exploit, but seemed to view it in the light of her former flittings to the witch's sheeling before the lark was up; yet I wished to make her understand that Sanford should not have been suffered to attend her—the hint was delicate—I hesitated.

"What are you thinking of Walter?"

"That Helen may be uneasy at your absence, Marion, and"—

"Oh, Kitty went to impart my freak, and my intention of breakfasting with *you*—with

Granny's cloak," she added, laughing, "we stole her basket, stocked with dainties for her pet; the moment we espied Mr. Fielding on the causeway we slid into the school-room, and laid out breakfast—come."

While we breakfasted Marion in her jocund way touched off our old adventures, but I remarked she never introduced Quinilla. I was longing to get over my unpleasant hint respecting Sanford, and *à propos* of something very foreign to the subject, said, "Sanford I suppose is off with William Driscoll; I wish he were off altogether," and then fearful of displeasing her, I added hastily, "Fielding will breakfast at the cottage."

Marion colored. "I took good care that mischief-maker should not see me; we watched till he was out of sight."

"Mischief-maker! the man who saved our lives!"

"Did he save yours?" ejaculated Marion, "then I forgive him."

"Forgive him, Marion, has he injured you?"

"He is always reproaching Mr. Sanford, Walter, he wants him to go away before his

wound is cured. My aunt was pitiful to a worm once ! but Mr. Fielding is the cause—and then he is for ever watching me, and setting Grace to watch me, and Kitty Driscoll—all because he thinks that Mr. Sanford likes to speak to me ; 'tis no wonder that he should : *I* give him a kind word—that Fielding wishes to destroy him.”

“ Is it Sanford who interprets Fielding’s conduct thus, Marion ? and are you his confidant ? ”

“ I am the only one who has a spark of pity for that ill-treated creature,” cried Marion vehemently ; “ the others turn from him as if he were a murderer instead of being nearly murdered himself, unfortunate young man ! even Helen !—he declares that even Helen has joined with Mr. Fielding in urging him to go—he is not fit to go—his wound will open—he told me so ! was ever any thing so barbarous ! ”

“ Marion,” said I, “ it is possible you are deceived ; I myself saw Fielding watching like a brother at Sanford’s bedside.”

“ Oh ! they have *turned you* completely,” said

Marion, flushing the deepest crimson—"he has not a friend in the wide world.—And he is ill—very ill.—You used to be kind-hearted, Walter—Mr. Sanford will die—he told me he should die, if they persist in sending him away."

"And do you credit all that he affirms, Marion? do you regard this stranger, the acquaintance of a few months, more than the friends who—"

"More than I do you, and aunt, and Helen," interrupted Marion eagerly;—"no, no! I did not care a straw for him, until I thought that he was dead—and then Walter, I felt I could have died a thousand times to—Was it my fault, Walter? was it!" She seized my hand and gasped for breath, her eyes emitting that same mysterious gleam which had harrowed me the day before.

"He was justly punished," I exclaimed; "Why did he deceive Quinilla?"

"Don't name her, don't name her," cried Marion, "it makes me dark! it makes me—oh, I do so hate her!"

Every word she uttered encreased my indig-

nation against Sanford. “*She* is the deceiver,” said Marion, pacing the room with rapid steps; “we all believed her tales! her falsehood! it *was* false Walter! it *was*?—Mr. Sanford never loved her; never said he loved her—But there was a falsehood worse than that—I’ll tell you, and then you’ll hate her too—she said I was an artful hypocrite, that I wanted to marry Mr. Sanford! now don’t you hate her Walter?”

“But he is going; no one can accuse you when he is gone.”

“And if he goes, he dies!—he told me so this very morning.”

“You would not detain him—would you Marion? you do not—love him?”

The change in Marion’s aspect was so extraordinary and so instantaneous, that I stood considering her intently, half wavering in my scepticism as to the existence of demoniacs—Had some capricious essence been transfused into my sister?—every trace of anger vanished from her countenance—she sat down, leaned her head upon her hand and said, thoughtfully, “Kitty Driscoll is very happy—she is very happy, happier than she was before she married—Mr. San-

ford bade me observe how happy Kitty is ! 'tis only having some one else to love—'tis only having some one else to love," she repeated, sinking again into a reverie.

I could assign no reason for these fitful moods, save the dreaded one—attachment to Sanford; but could love excite to passion, prejudice and hatred, a mind like Marion's? All the endearing qualities of her former joyous nature stood out more brightly as contrasted with the darkened picture of her present state of mind; I looked at her almost angrily, while she seemed lost in meditation; at length, heaving a deep sigh, she ejaculated, "I should be eternally wretched if I destroyed him."

"Marion," said I, bitterly, "was it to express your anxieties for Mr. Sanford that you came to me? was it to impart a resolution that will break my heart?"

"Break *your* heart, Walter! I would rather break my own!—Is there a fairy spell upon me?—Am I born to work evil?—How I wish I was in Heaven! yes," she resumed after a moment's pause, "I wish we were all there."—She threw her arm round my neck. "Do

you remember, Walter, how we used to sit whole hours and picture Heaven, and think what a beautiful world it must be if it were more beautiful than this world—How we used to wonder whether the roof it wears could be more splendid than our sky, or whether the floor could be more lovely than our carpeting of heaths! We used to say that only angels deserved to inhabit a world so beautiful as this is; and oh! how I have worshipped with my whole, whole, heart, that Great Spirit who gave us skies, and lakes, and flowers, so surpassing lovely! He must be wonderful, I thought who could invent a region more enchanting still; and often, Walter, I have wished to see him, if all of you could see him with me.”

“ But *now* Marion,” said I, “ *now* you would wish for others in your Paradise.”

“ Every one,” cried Marion earnestly; “ I wish every one to see that everlasting wonder: and, lately, I have longed more than ever to behold Him; for I dreamed of Heaven two nights ago, and since that dream the face of all things here seems changed—I am not happy as I used to be, not the whole day long—I want

to fly again through stars, and moons, and suns, and talk to those bright creatures!—They did not look as you do—not reproachful—they coaxed me forward—I wished to turn and call you and Helen, but they led me on with such a smile! What wondrous scenery! the loveliest fairy-land we ever imaged was nothing to compare to it!—what waterfalls! rapid yet noiseless; hushed by the presence of the Eternal. Helen's little flock was there, wreathed with rings of dazzling stars. I was so sorry when I awoke!"

While Marion described these shapings of her dream, the melancholy, pious, child-like expression of her deep blue eyes, was inconceivably affecting. "You are more a visionary than ever my dear Marion," I observed.

"'Tis very true," said Marion; "I am always roving now to other worlds: but sometimes Walter, sometimes," she shuddered, darting a swift, piercing look around the chamber, "Walter I am sometimes led away by other beings—not human—not angelic—with such fixed eyes—leaden—and unwinking lids—and faces so unnaturally calm!—they neither frown,

nor smile, nor ever change their solemn footfall—but on they go—still on, through mouldering tombs, and I between them—at every step increasing iciness pervades me, as if I were freezing inch by inch into a statue; 'tis horrid to feel your heart grow into marble; your very breath becoming solid! I struggle to free myself—the chill figures moan, 'it is your doom! you have destroyed a fellow-creature.'

I gazed at her with a heart-sinking I had never felt till then; every feature was swollen and distorted.

"But the most terrible of all," she whispered, "the most terrible of all, is when I find myself, indeed, hearsed in cold, cold, stone, and forced to stand between my sullen guards: I see you all—*you*, Helen, every one I love—I see you all led onward by those moving statues; led on to take your death-stand at my side—I try to burst my solid flesh—I try to lift a hand—to raise a warning finger—I can not—I can not! my voice is forced to echo theirs—to moan that withering curse—'It is your doom! you have destroyed a fellow-creature'." She fell senseless on my arm.

A thought so horrible flashed across my brain that for very agony I screamed aloud to hasten approaching footsteps, afraid of being suffered for a moment to harbour the suspicion—"She is dying," I exclaimed, "she is—Fielding save me from distraction!"

"Hush!" said Fielding snatching her from me, "be firm—the worst is over—this will pass away."

"Is she?" I gasped, "is she?—oh have mercy! speak the truth."

"Her mind has wandered—certainly—but the worst is over—such hallucinations are not serious;—hers can be accounted for by obvious causes—the recent shock—nerves tenderly susceptible—the derangement is but partial."

"Derangement!"

"Be cautious—she revives—if she become conscious of her aberration I cannot answer for the consequence. She has imbibed singular impressions and antipathies, which, if not noticed, will in time subside—I have seen many thus affected, and restored—caution is essential—indeed she is not incurable—indeed she is not." He took my hand and pressed it cordi-

ally. "I would not deceive you Walter, you know I would not—come—we must get her home. Helen is on the causeway—call her."

I stood rooted, watching the dawn of consciousness which succeeded Marion's frightfully vacant stare.

"Assist me, pray assist me," said Fielding; "rouse yourself—call Helen: indeed the aberration is passing fast away—Marion *now* is simply incoherent; indulgence, quiet, prevention of excitement, will effect a cure; the disease is not inherent; it is merely accidental—were it hereditary—"

He continued to speak, but I was deaf and paralysed; smote as by the desolating blight which struck the disobedient—the mystery that had harassed me so long was by a lightning thought at once revealed—we were inheritors of madness!

CHAPTER VII.

Our barren years are past ;
Be this of life the first, of sloth the last.

Statius.

I KNOW not how long I remained in a state of stupor ; my friend's remonstrances aroused me — Marion was gone. I listened to Fielding for awhile with indifference, occupied only by gloomy presages of an inavertable calamity ; but his energy at last fixed my attention, and the unusual sternness of his countenance overawed me. He finished a forcible appeal by the following memorable words. “ You have hitherto dreamed away existence, and had circum-

stances remained unchanged you might have dozed on in guiltless and contented lethargy. But circumstances *have* changed; and high, and powerful, and honorable incentives must prevail with you—there are more exalted aims than the selfish ambition of literary repose, and nobler enjoyments than the gratification of domestic affections, however amiable and well directed. You are called on to protect those who have protected you—to aid in their support—to act the comforter. Will you disappoint their hope, their almost solitary hope?—Your uncle is destitute—his agent has absconded with all that he possessed.”

I bore this intelligence with a calmness that astonished me: it seemed as if the sudden insight I had obtained of the calamity which menaced us had annihilated feeling. Imperceptibly, however, his communication formed, what Fielding had intended, (without, indeed, suspecting the extreme cause of my stupefaction) a countercheck to the shock which had occasioned my mental paralysis.

“Your uncle’s misfortunes,” resumed Fielding, viewing me fixedly, as if to limit his dis-

closure to my strength of mind, "are aggravated by duplicity and ingratitude; he has become liable to the penalty of a heavy bond in which he had joined as a security for a treacherous friend—he has been—arrested."

"Arrested!"

"I have ascertained the extent of his embarrassment," went on Fielding; "it may subject him to a long imprisonment; he is resigned, and only anxious for his family. I never saw misfortune met with such unostentatious firmness."

This tribute to my uncle's worth caused a salutary revulsion of feeling.

"But," pursued Fielding, "I have witnessed traits of unconscious heroism in this wild glen which might form a romance for more sophisticated circles. I have seen cruel and unlooked for reverses borne by a gentle girl without complaint, almost without a tear: the sharpest tests dauntlessly encountered; the humblest offices fulfilled with cheerfulness, and the burden of complicated duties so lightly carried that but for my previous knowledge of your family I should have thought your sister's fortitude was

the result of life-long trial. To what enduring constancy may not high moral excellence raise a tender, delicate woman ! the votaries of glittering accomplishments would look in vain for their coveted applause if contrasted with Helen. Your aunt too, humble and untaught, surpasses in the wisdom which moral strength bestows the brightest of your sages. The letter conveying intelligence of her husband's arrest arrived in the very hour which might have seen her brother amenable to the charge of murder ; these thunder-claps were followed by Marion's mental alienation and your illness—she had contending duties to decide between—she chose the most imperative but the most severe ; she stayed with her adopted children."

Fielding took no notice of my keen emotion ; it appeared as if he had tried to induce tears.

" But there is still another in my catalogue of the wise and gentle—how loveable is woman fulfilling pleasantly her social duties ; I could forgive a second choice of my father if it fell on Grace McQuillan !—I could make love to her myself," added Fielding, with a half-smile, " but for the fear of your resentment. Grace

met the brunt of mischief gallantly; a veteran in expedient; never astonished or disheartened: as cool in cases of emergency as if the business of life were to heal wounds and heart-aches. She boldly took charge of all my patients, under guidance of your Ballygobbin Esculapius, when I visited your uncle: I was not absent long, for the physic of the mind was necessary, and this her medical ally could not impart."

"Oh Fielding," I exclaimed, "you were the son, the brother, while I—"

"While you were suffering, partly from constitutional infirmity, partly from your own imprudence—You see I am not used to glozing, Walter; when will you learn to control impulses which render you the victim of every shade that flits across the scene? your sister's malady is a fraction in the amount of misfortune you are called upon to mitigate."

"Do you account so lightly, loss of reason?" I ejaculated.

"*Can* I undervalue the gift that opens to our hope an immortality in which all the channels of disease and suffering find a termination?" replied Fielding—"Next to loss of rectitude I

count loss of reason the most grievous ill to which mortality is liable: but why do you persist in viewing evil through a magnifying medium? I am a better physician than a painter Walter; I have made the causes of insanity a peculiar study, and I repeat that Marion's wandering is curable; tranquillity, employment, the removal of certain persons who keep up her excitement, will effect an entire restoration—such was my hope even when her mania wore a violent and stubborn character.”

Avowal was upon my tongue, but I remembered Helen, and restrained myself; Helen was unconscious of our terrible inheritance; why should I, by divulging it, render *her* too an object of compassion?

Fielding resumed—“Marion is dependent on you as on others for the observances which I require; watchful attendance, unshaken firmness, tenderness as unrelaxing, have brought her to her present state of convalescence. Do not be outdone, by a mere girl, in self-control—brace yourself to meet all changes tranquilly—your aunt is preparing for removal; you will have to enter on a novel course; *friends* may be

found to forward you—This disclosure has relieved me from a painful part of the duty I am bound to : I must leave you now to remonstrate with a person more unpersuadable I fear than you are—reflect on my advice—you cannot free your uncle from embarrassment, but you can contribute to his support—a powerful stimulus is necessary to counteract your train of feeling and of habit : your family exigencies present such a stimulus ; let them be to you the medicine of the mind, and you will thus convert to solid benefit these troublous accidents.” He left me.

I paced the room, too confused to form a clear judgment of our actual situation. I tried to view in its various shadowings the picture of distress which Fielding had portrayed, but I could not think—I could not think—my faculties seemed withered ! Those who are menaced with a train of evil for which in their own conduct they can find no obvious grounds, are often tempted to overlook the necessary connexion between cause and effect, and to insert, for natural sequences, the mystic-working power of an overruling fatality—A feeling rebellious

to a doom considered unmerited was called forth, to the exclusion of Fielding's representations. Madness, even in the mitigated form under which I had recently beheld it, was appalling; but I had witnessed it under a yet more hideous aspect.—A miserable decrepid creature, once living near our glen, and known as the maniac of the mountain, had been afflicted with lycanthropy, a species of madness which transfuses the properties of beasts into the human system. This haggard wretch, grisly and ferocious, now passed before my imagination: involuntarily I imitated the wolfish howl with which he used to scare the timid children; damp thrills shook my frame, the chamber walls seemed collapsing, and closing in around me—Did I behold my future semblance in this monster?

In agony of spirit I was tempted to arraign such mysterious dispensations—was mercy then but partial? Divine benevolence a sophism? I remembered having questioned my good aunt upon the subject of this maniac: her wholesome argument recurred: 'are we, who have no right to life at all, to arraign the laws of God, to ask why some are strait and some are crip-

ples? as well may we enquire why we have not angels' wings and angels' sinless natures! that stunted maniac may stand before the wise ones of the earth in Paradise: no awful voice will call him to a reckoning!

I followed eagerly the train of inference this reasoning gave rise to; Marion! my poor Marion! was not responsible for her new-born errors. Reflection was accompanied by another assuasive; her love for Sanford might have no firmer hold than had her hatred for Quinilla, and both sentiments might prove mere transitory impressions in this partial oblivion of her former state of feeling. She was recovering; Fielding had avouched it; and he was one of those I never doubted; it was then possible that even when inherent this disease might be controlled. A vow passed my lips never voluntarily, to leave my sisters. We would be obedient to a fiat that had its origin in benevolence. The very circumstance that cut us off from other ties drew us closer to each other. I would pursue the most toilsome avocation, submit to drudgery the most servile, but I would reserve the privilege of guarding them:

we would all three labour patiently, untiringly, but together; our earnings should be consecrated to those who had protected us. How often, without any virtual alteration in the ills we muse upon, are our souls lifted from despondence to serenity! a few minutes before, and my mind seemed to have taken a decidedly mournful direction: suddenly a mountain weight of anguish was removed; I became calm enough to consider how I might, as Grace had recommended, 'learn an honest calling, something solid which should turn to account upon a rainy day.' Of the ways which were to lead to this desirable end I was profoundly ignorant,—I had not even a dim idea of practical occupation.—A 'poor scholar' deserves his epithet; in exigencies like the present his store of antiquated learning is less available than the craft of the humblest mechanic. I had not strength for manual labour; I had often tried to dig, but the employment was as uncongenial to my bodily as to my mental capabilities. Of modern trade or traffic I knew no more than I had caught from Grace McQuillan's items of her monthly barter at

Bally-Gobbin : the term machinery caused a constipation of ideas ; the simple revolutions of a water-wheel, and the complex movements of a steam-engine, would have equally puzzled and distracted me.

To follow the higher paths to fortune, pointed out by Madame Wallenberg, would part me from my family ; in fact I had no certain indication of their course, and for the fine arts I adjudged myself without taste or genius.

There was one thing favorable ; I had no extravagances to unlearn—we had been early taught the riches of frugality, to squander nothing that we might bestow ; a generous economy was practised by my uncle ; we were as unacquainted with luxury as with poverty ; the latter, it is true, had been in our own persons so little contemplated that for some time I found a difficulty in believing we were poor, actually poor—nay pennyless and in debt—more destitute than the wretched cottiers for whose relief we had learned to curtail the slight indulgences of childhood. But though our fare was frugal it was neither coarse nor niggardly ; it had its relish from my good aunt's

thriftiness though it lacked dainty condiments: we knew nothing of privation, hardship, servitude,—yet we must bend to these, and help to lighten the dreary prospect now unfolding.

While pondering thus, I left the ruin and walked mechanically to the islet-point above the creek. I sat down upon the jetty and continued to ruminate on the methods of acquiring what I had never coveted till then. The ripples of the bay playing round Driscoll's boat abstracted my ideas, at least my sober ones, which appeared to float off with the current, leaving my mind to the influence of fantastic speculations, whose scope was, to establish El Dorado schemes for liberating my uncle. Accidents without a shade of probability were presented to my imagination; the visions of the alchymist, fairy-gifts, dreams of buried treasure, the goblin tales of childhood were revived, with their wishing-caps, and magic lamps, and diamond valleys. I felt half credulous of the wild suggestion that I might become the Fortunatus of some golden coast—a jump into the boat put all my magic squad to flight.

“’Tis a raw day, Master Walter, for you to face without a hat,” cried William Driscol, flourishing his oar: “we were glad to our hearts to hear the fever left you, Sir.”

“Are you for home or for the headland, William—will you ferry me across?”

“I’m waiting here for Mr. Sanford, Sir; *his-self* is waiting too, for somebody I b’lieve; may be you haven’t seen Miss Marion, Sir?”

The voice of Sanford, hailing Driscol, made me spring towards the ruin with more alacrity than I had ever exercised before—but Sanford was already near, my only chance of avoiding his recognition was to ascend the ivy ladder—this I performed with a fleetness that amazed me—I sat down to recover breath and to rejoice at my escape. I could not think of this young man without a rankling uneasiness: but for him, and the train of mischiefs he had introduced, Marion’s malady perhaps had remained dormant. The creek was just beneath my window and I eagerly watched for his departure; he was already in the boat when Fielding appeared and called to him; I observed them slowly winding round the building until a buttress hid them.

As I was on the point of emerging from my rookery I distinguished footsteps, and to my inexpressible annoyance the voices of Fielding and his companion sounded from the outer chamber. The very commencement of their dialogue took from me the power of motion; I was fixed by astonishment, my arm half extended to withdraw the curtain: there was a sudden cessation of mental processes; my reason seemed to pause: I do protest that for several moments I suspected that my vagrant fancy was playing off a juggle, to revive my foregoing illusions of fairy-craft and transmutation,

CHAPTER VIII.

Be just in all you say, and all you do ;
Whatever be your birth, you're sure to be
A Peer of the first magnitude to me.

Jur.

YOUR subterfuge for such delay is worn out, my lord," said Fielding; "your excuses are contradictory and inconclusive. Your object in this pursuit remains doubtful as before."

"Your own purposes appear to me as questionable, Mr. Fielding," replied Sanford.

"They do not, my lord," said Fielding, emphatically; "they cannot. My purposes are undisguised; to evade an honest question you shuffle and prevaricate."

"A gentlemanlike courtesy might have softened your insulting accusation, Sir. I consider

you bound to me for the honorable satisfaction I shall demand."

"Lord Sanford," replied Fielding, "you will demand it vainly. Proclaim my abhorrence of honorable homicide if you will—my code of honor is engraven on a less changeable material than the world's opinion. I repeat, the satisfaction misnamed honorable, will not be granted you by me."

"Neither," retorted Sanford, "will I accord to you the satisfaction you require."

"Then I have an open course to follow," said Fielding. "The deception in which you so unwarrantably made me a participator shall be instantly exposed."

"With your fixed principles of honor," returned Sanford, "it is extraordinary that our respective ranks in life should have been so long concealed. The *deception*, as you term it, had its origin in a simple *badinage*; it was continued from motives you shall not force me to avow—give them what cast you please; I am indifferent: but again I would suggest that your own motives for remaining here assume as questionable a coloring as mine."

“Your conscience disavows your double charge, my lord. Could any one gifted with humanity desert this little household in their distress? Retrace the circumstances of our fellowship. Accident made us travelling companions; the ease and freedom of a tour, prosecuted without the trammels of that observance which retinue and rank impose, were cordially enjoyed by both; our tastes and habits seemed congenial—it was not until I heard you palm what I conceived to be a purposeless fiction on an unsuspecting family that I found you held too lightly the restraint which truth imposes. The sequel gave rise to a still more grave suspicion.”

“Upon my soul,” said Sanford, laughing, “I cannot, even for the respect I bear such matter-of-fact philosophy, I cannot resist a vulgar propensity to the comic when I review that inimitable catastrophe!—Venus rising from a duck pond! ‘wafting odours to the wind!’—The scene could only be surpassed by the exquisite *denouement*—Dido reviling poor innocent Eneas, and exhorting her bull-headed Midas to the judgment!—Spite of his sword’s uncivil

injuries I can hug the memory of that Hibernian Furioso: 'tis the key to mirth; neither blister nor rough bandaging could rust it!—Were it not for the *ultimate*, which turned out more tragical than pleasant, and might have untimely ended my 'strange eventful history,' I could conjure up this drama on occasion to drive off black spirits and blue.—But I cry pardon for this digression—pray go on—you stopped at 'grave suspicion.' ”

Fielding's tone showed no disturbance at his companion's raillery. “This grave suspicion was excited by your covert admiration of—”

“Covert admiration!” echoed Sanford.—“My admiration of Marion was visible enough. Could any but the infatuated conceive that my devotion to that diabolical old Dido was sincere?—But go on, go on.”

“It was so conceived by those too honest to be incredulous,” said Fielding. “Your admiration, I would observe, of a girl so simple and so beautiful—”

“Enough of that, if you expect a listener,” said Sanford. “You may call one merely woman ‘beautiful’—Marion is a human seraph!”

—reserve your cold encomia for her sister.—
How suddenly your remonstrances for our departure were remitted, when you became domesticated with that sybil namesake of the Greek enchantress !”

“ Is your appetite for banter satisfied my lord ?”

“ I do not banter ‘ *by my ancesthers* !’ If Helen did not teach you to forgive poor fallible man an involuntary lapse, by making yourself a participator in the transgression, why, I would ask, why your sudden tolerance of what you had so strenuously condemned ?”

“ Simply because I found the plan which I suspected you of forming could not succeed.”

“ I would remark upon the candour of such a suspicion, Mr. Fielding, and then I would enquire, why might not the plan succeed which I infer that *you* infer, was so unholy ?”

“ Because temptation, in order to succeed, must find some congenial soil to sow its poison in, and there was no such soil in Marion’s mind. I discarded all my apprehensions when I knew her ; therefore I waited patiently till

you should also find your plan was futile. I could have defied you to pervert that mind, guileless as a child's, yet pure as angel's.—Yes, I could have defied you to lure your seraph from her Paradise !”

“Thanks for the implication,” exclaimed Sanford; “’tis generous to discover a man’s meaning ; it saves the person thus benevolently interpreted a world of pondering. I might have been puzzled to make out the drift of my intentions. But if my seraph be thus temptation-proof why would you scare away the crest-fallen deluder ? To be exiled after being baffled is punishment supererogatory ; why not let the serpent crawl a little longer through the Eden you appropriate ; just for amendment of his nature.”

“When your enquiries assume that serious tone the subject merits I will reply my lord.”

“There are more problems in the human mind than even your sagacious theory can solve,” returned Sanford ; “but for the present I waive irrelevant discussion. Seriously then I ask, why am I again importuned to give

up an intercourse most sweet and pleasant, if Marion be impenetrable to the blandishment you accuse me of employing?"

"Because her mind is now untuned," said Fielding. "You know it is—you know that you retard its cure. Have you a spark of generous feeling? Think upon her family—recall the simple honesty with which they trusted your professions. They thought you poor when they admitted you—were you less hospitably treated?—They found you frivolous and heartless, abusing their generous confidence, ridiculing a weak and therefore pitiable woman; yet they nursed you with a mother's and a sister's tenderness. The offender was forgotten; they only saw in you the stranger helpless and disabled. Your accident was caused by your own levity; was it fair to practise such inconsiderate mockery?—Has your conduct ever been arraigned? Has Helen or her aunt ever cancelled the merit of her conduct by reproach?—Yet their misfortunes might well have excused a lack of hospitality.—Poverty, sudden and complete—one beloved relative immured within a prison—another waking from insensi-

bility to delirium—Walter's death hourly anticipated—obliged to a dependant, as they thought and still imagine, for their daily food!—Did these distresses close their hearts against you;—did they remit one look of kindness? control one generous impulse to soften your confinement with indulgences purchased by their self-denial? They ask nothing in return but forbearance—I have assured them you can travel without risk. Leave them. Even now I come from them to intercede for your instant departure. A trying scene has been the consequence of this morning's giddy adventure—Marion has relapsed.”

“ Marion!—have you seen her? I left her but a few hours ago in perfect health and loveliness. Is she really ill?”

“ My lord you know that her mind is disordered.”

“ But not materially; you yourself have assured me the derangement would be transient—has she?—is she?—say any thing.”

“ I can neither answer for her reason nor her life if she be thus incessantly excited.—Why do you haunt her with pathetic tales of your

distress?—her feelings are intense—too intense. She suffers even now from a paroxysm brought on by your exaggerated representations.”

“ But she will recover: do not torture me !”

“ She had almost recovered when you furtively renewed your equivocal addresses. A few erroneous fantasies alone remained, which time and change of scene would have corrected—On these very points you beset her—If your pursuit be not insidious what name does it deserve?”

“ Honorable!—You start Mr. Fielding—That epithet seems to have been overlooked in the terms you applied to my intentions.”

“ One naturally associates guilt with mystery Lord Sanford—Truly there are problems in the human mind which no philosophy can reach—I beg your pardon, frankly, if I have wronged you; but in excuse I plead the simplicity of a candid dealer—If you meant fairly, why a counterfeit?—Why cheat a silly woman?”

“ Why?—for mirth, or for caprice, or for experiment.—Perhaps I would determine how far old Dido’s vanity might lead her—perhaps I would enjoy a farce, or form a subject for a

comedy—You are fond of drawing inferences ; I pray you invent one—I might have wished to win in humble guise my mountain maiden ; I might have had no aim at all ; but now at last I *am* decided. —I will marry Marion.”

“The decision is rather arrogantly expressed Lord Sanford ; you seem secure of her affections.”

“Had I no other sanction for my confidence, your allegation Mr. Fielding might supply one —Have you not ascribed her malady to anxiety for me ?”

“Certainly : her moral sense is wounded ; she forms conclusions on mistaken grounds ; she believes you are ill-treated, and is impressed by an idea, which she incessantly asks us to confute, that she caused the accident from which you suffered—whether her consequent disturbance and remorse might not have been as lively were its object her blind minstrel, is yet to be discovered.”

“You are complimentary Sir.”

“And perhaps mistaken. I would only have you suspend your declaration until Marion’s faculties shall resume their tone : her compas-

sion is now unnaturally strained ; we shall see if her affection be as severely tried.—Leave her for awhile—the interval you may employ in dispassionately considering the importance of a step decided on, I fear, without reflection. You have a brother whose eldership of more than twenty years invests him with almost a paternal charter to direct you—he is childless ; of course you are his representative.—May not his opinion merit a little deference ?”

“Oh ! he is ruled by my imperial sister-in-law, whom one would imagine a descendant of the Czars ! she shakes the sceptre even over me ; but then for my allegiance she vouchsafes me her particular regard. Lord Dellival married a portionless foreigner some fifteen years ago ; he cannot therefore twit me on the score of prudence. Moreover ever since he lost his children he manifests a feverish impatience to behold new sureties for the transmission of our ancient name. My Irish snow-drop will present our fashionable Amphyctyons as fair excuse for folly as *his* exotic.”

“For the very reason that you call it folly, it would be wise to reconsider it, but not under

the influence of Marion's fascinations. Quit the glen, return to your courtly sphere, and ask yourself whether your snow-drop could be transplanted, safely, to such a soil."

"Quit the glen!—not without Marion—I am sworn to this!—You are a more impracticable logician than even the O'Toole—Your remonstrance seemed directed to induce compunction, and at the turnstile of repentance you would send me back to all my ancient levities!"

"I would have you consider these levities a barrier between yourself and Marion—'Tis for *her* sake that I contend; she would find rank and influence poor palliatives for an ill-assorted union."

"There are discrepancies, I grant you, in birth and circumstances; but—"

"Tush!—your aristocracy of place would be well repaid by Marion's aristocracy of sentiment—I did not contemplate such distinctions—Your minds have no affinities."

"Sage expounder, will you interpret us?"

"Willingly my Lord—*You* are an airy, versatile, aspiring, somewhat selfish, somewhat

supercilious, man of fashion ! a lover and a friend just as it suits your passion or convenience ; high-bred, in the usual acceptation of the word ; the leader of a school which, though jealous of its light-spun honor, sometimes sanctions in favor of its particular cynosures slight deviations from vulgar, common-place integrity—In better circumstances, by which I mean, morally healthier, you might have been a better man.”

“Bravo ; we thank you, O’Toole himself could not have executed a fairer, *by which I mean* a fouler home-thrust—Now for my mountain maiden.”

“Marion is unambitious, unaccomplished, genuine, unselfish ; full of kind affections ; nestling joyously amid the sharers of her sympathies ; attached to the very homeliness of home ; linked by a powerful feeling to the soil that nurtured her, to the humble friends whose poverty calls forth the simple charities she delights in. Marion would wither beneath the artificial atmosphere of your exotics. She would find no opiate for her mind’s affliction in

the turmoil of vapid competition. 'Tis not disparity of birth it is disparity of mind, Lord Sanford, that makes unhappy unions."

"Pray Sir," said Sanford, "may I assume that the same disparity does not exist between Marion's sister and Sir William Fielding's son?"

"Nor yet between Helen Fitzgerald and Lord Sanford," replied Fielding.—"You look astonished ;—there are indeed distinctions—marked distinctions, but not so irreconcilable ; Helen would try to raise you to her standard ; Marion would cling in secret to her old prepossessions, but would not dare to express her dissent from your opinion."

"Pray continue, Mr. Fielding."

"Helen, too, has more ambition than her sister, but it is so finely tempered that it adds another charm to her character. She would move undazzled in your orbit. The one, fanciful, sensitive, and enthusiastic, is fashioned for her own wilds alone ; the other, with taste and genius, with feelings as deep and fervent, but better governed, could conform to any station

without compromising by a single weakness, her dignity or her integrity."

"Therefore my peccant habits would be railed at by the one, and kindly winked at by the other."

"Not kindly; Marion's spirit would disclaim alliance with the worldly as faithfully as Helen's: if she loves you, 'tis because you practise here, it may be for a purpose, those virtues native to her mind."

"There your definition is at fault; those virtues are native to *my* mind also, and shoot up spontaneous on occasion. I am fond of doing good when I have nothing else to do. As to your rare analysis, it has not dissuaded me one tittle—were it only to demonstrate that your portraits of me and Marion are sheer daubery, I would persist.—Do you think my mountain-maid will be indifferent to the homage she must win?—Do you think *any* maid, wife, or widow, ever trod this labyrinthian world *reproachless* without the aid of vanity?—'Tis their sex-preserver!"

"I have said that Marion is not formed for your labyrinthian world. You forget her

simple training. She knows not one of those accomplishments which nurture vanity. To your gilded canopies she would prefer the shadow of her alder trees, and a garland of heath-flowers to a coronet."

"Suspend your verdict for awhile. You shall hear the lovely Lady Sanford quoted. The current ore of our *exclusives* shall bear her impress: her graceful blunders will supersede our high-tone jargon. A few lessons from Fanny Berrington, and Marion will imbibe that essence of elegance, caprice, and carelessness comprised in the word *fashion*."

"Fanny Berrington is not a pupil of your school."

"Not willingly," said Sanford laughing—"She would rather belong to yours; but, in despite of her, her *air enjoué* assigns her to our giddy clique. Therefore I shall claim her tutelage for Marion.—Fanny will infuse grace—Lady Dellival dignity."

"Lady Dellival!—Beneath her influence poor Marion would render up her right to think that she was right, and die of heart-ache!—I have seen the Marchioness—I know

her also by report—Marion—The Marchioness—What a companionship!”

“ I confess,” said Sanford, “ the dove and eagle would be kindlier mated.—My lady lords it bravely !—Still she has held her supereminence scathless ; the most searching beam has never made her blink. I am proud of my sister-in-law and rejoice that she preserves her autocracy unassailed.”

“ Because she is your sister-in-law ; it flatters your self-complacency.”

“ I seldom analyze the motive of my likings, Mr. Fielding ; I am no philosopher. As to the Marchioness, I was so young when she became my brother’s wife that I fell under her domination naturally. I might respect her for supplying my mother’s place, if not tenderly, carefully, as regards myself ; and as regards my family, irreproachably—She never names her own—thence I conclude her pride takes its spring from other circumstances than noble birth—She is just the woman to forget her family name, unless it were emblazoned.”

“ Lady Dellival is not the single instance of a woman lowly born and portionless, bearing

her palmy honors with overweening haughtiness."

"She bears them as she ought; her name never was, nor ever will be, on the tarnished list. If our revenues are not augmented by her dower, at least they are not squandered upon poor relations. She keeps these poverty-revivers wisely in the back ground. Therefore I have long ago forgotten the little that I heard of her."

"Perhaps the scenes of infancy can find no comfortable place in her remembrance."

"Her emotions of the past certainly are not vivid," returned Sanford. "She never reverts to matters bearing date before her marriage with my brother, who is himself laconic on the subject of his lady's past adventures. But then the Marchioness, by obvious calculation must be verging upon forty, a period when women seldom boast retention of infantile events. Their 'pleasures of memory,' then, are laid upon the shelf.—Besides, the Marchioness is a woman who, I suspect, has never let the vulgar look into her heart; not even when she lost her children—two boys; my brother

mourns them still.—If his wife sheds tears they must be shed in secret for no one ever sees them.”

“ And is Marion, with all her home-attachments, to fall under the domination, as you aptly style it, of such a heartless woman?”

“ Your epithets are civil, Mr. Fielding; but philosophy excuseth a multitude of rudenesses. Despite your prejudice the Marchioness is admired, and I esteem every woman amiable who is admired; illogical people are glad to base their judgment on the world’s opinion. Perhaps you think that Helen would be a neophyte more worthy Lady Dellival.”

“ Helen !”

“ You smile, but let us put it to the proof; I make Marion Lady Sanford, and transport her to the capital. Helen will accompany her sister. How long will their young heads withstand the battery of admiration?—not the waning of a moon!—Nay I set my marquise against your Baronetcy *unpresumptive*, that in one little week both sisters will forget their rocks and camlet robes, pigs, daisies, knitting-pins, old pipers, naked footed

pages, whortleberry tarts, and elderberry wine."

"Pray exhaust your irony my lord; have you plans for any other of the family?"

"Yes, most philanthropic ones. I will get the O'Toole appointed Headsman in ordinary to Platoff, and wed old Dido to Fanfaron, my *homme d'atour*, a pretty fellow and very sentimental."

"That you may have leisure to arrange your liberalities, my lord, I wish you a good morning."

"Stop Mr. Fielding: you look indignant; if you take notes cynical of *my* friends, you should excuse my notes critical of *yours*.— Seriously I mean to ask for that sweet Marion this very hour, and thus to balance my score of obligations. When Helen is my sister you shall have our vote and interest; of course you are secure of her affections."

"I have not the excuse for vanity your lordship's personal attractions give, neither am I accustomed lightly to discuss a delicate woman's feelings. I hoped when I began this subject to lead you to a graver state of mind, more

suitable to the present crisis. You seem to have forgotten that Marion's health is delicate, her reason tottering—”

“ Hush!—you shall predict evil of me, of my *belle sœur*, of any one but Marion. I acknowledge my obliquities, and tender the *amende*. She shall be my wife to-day if the aunt please, (there will be no obstacle in that quarter I conjecture). Come; presto! no demur. I do not wish to take a night-view of the *mésalliance*.”

“ I wish you would my lord. Consider her state of mind—her uncle's situation.”

“ His difficulties are too serious for me to ponder on; I leave him and them to your philanthropy, with a caution—Beware of being too profuse; Sir William may cut you off for squandering his ingots.”

“ Is it just to seek the house of mourning in such a trifling mood, to—”

“ Spare your sermon Mr. Fielding—I must imp my feeble wing to carry off my Marion. How the aunt's eyes will glisten! The licence will be here at day-break, borne by fleet Mistress Mulligan or one of her attendants, liveried in flesh-color. Come; else I go alone, and

then you lose the *scena*. What a riot of exhilaration!—the naked-footed pages will split our auditory!—*allons!*—Ha! Walter! I'm heartily glad to see you."

I had listened to the commencement of the foregoing dialogue with an obliteration of self so complete, that I could not be held accountable, on moral grounds, for any act committed during this temporary suspension of my identity. I have since experienced the same wonderment and absorption at a well sustained dramatic dialogue, devouring the speeches of the actors, mindful only of the plot. But as the strange conference proceeded I began to feel twilight conception of actual things;—the process was slow, however, which brought me to the dawn.

When Sanford declared he would marry my sister my limbs were unloosed, and, with equal confusion of sense and indistinctness of purpose, I drew back the curtain. The speakers were ensconced in the window recess. Like a cautious somnambulist I emerged, took my place upon the minstrel's throne, and bent my ear to the discourse, with the same greedy solicitude for the extraordinary that Helen's old

legends used to induce. The haze which enveloped my faculties little by little cleared off. One channel of thought grew pellucid—then another—I began to be conscious of self, and of my connexion with passing events. Still I patiently waited, with some vague fancy of being eventually appealed to, as umpire, by our controversialists; but Sanford's repetition of his purpose drew me forward. Their backs were towards me, and their attention was so fixed on the point contested, that my steps were unheard. Sanford turned abruptly; his greeting was given with an unembarrassed air, and he extended a hand which I did not accept.

My explanation, comprised in a few sentences, was addressed to Fielding, who looked much more confounded than his companion.—“And now, Sir,” I continued, turning to Sanford, “you spoke of a declaration to my aunt—I will accompany you—come.”

The young nobleman, taking me familiarly by the arm, led the way, calling on Fielding to follow.

CHAPTER IX.

Now understand
To Westmoreland
Which is my heritage,
I will you bring
And with a ring
By way of marriage
I will you take
And Lady make
As shortly as I can,
So have you won
An Earl's son
And not a vanquished man.

WE traversed the causeway in silence. The aspect of the day had changed ; chill lowering mist obscured our path ; the waves fell harshly on the shore. As I drew near the cottage localities my heart swelled. The wintry hue they wore was nothing ; I had often beheld them under such an aspect with tremors of joy. Now alas ! glimpses of more forlorn changes came to me, in deadening succession.

The paddock was waste ; the pear-tree leafless, and half shorn of its branches, appeared to bend itself sorrowfully over it ; the paling, up-torn, lay here and there in frost-covered splinters : they spoke to me in impressive and intelligible language—" We are broken up and sentenced to be burned !"—Not a gabbler floated on the duck pond—my ear expanded to catch the cluck of our conceited hen, the note of Helen's guinea-fowl—'Twas silence all ! the subjects of our little farm had rendered up existence, or passed into another territory.

We entered the cottage and traversed, unmet, the ground apartments—not a whisper—Heaven thou hast kindly guarded us from continuity of any feeling ! The numb despondency which fell upon me as I surveyed our library, I thought could never, never, pass away. The process of removal seemed just begun—some shelves were empty, some had lost but half their row of comforts, some held a melancholy straggler only. Old associates, suspenders of my happy cares, were cast upon the floor, lone, or in piles disorderly. Our " wee bit ingle," that used to " blink so bonnily,"

was fireless, rust-eaten, and plundered of its fender. My aunt's round table groaned under store-room wares, promiscuously huddled. The index of our ponderous time-piece had not moved perhaps from the point at which I last beheld it, for the click had ceased. The casement was dim and cobwebbed: a shutter flapping heavily. Who had taken the cushion from my uncle's chair?

I hemmed away a groan as I returned to the hall. Breesthough, his tail tucked close between his legs, sneaked from the kitchen. I caught myself inclining to embrace the sooty varlet; he dared not bark a welcome, but he looked one, and retreated swiftly at Katy's tender obtestation—"Come back you ugly villain or I'll choke you!"

I went up stairs brooding upon sad remembrances, unceremoniously bidding my companion to follow. I crossed the landing to the little chamber I used to call my own—a glance informed me it was appropriated to stowage. My aunt sat *idle* in the midst of sundry trunks and boxes, whose cordings were illustrative of Grace McQuillan's dexterous fingers. Grace herself

was kneeling before, and cramming small packages into, a trunk, already so well filled that common handicraft could not have interpolated therein a fairy's knee-buckle.

"My poor child!" exclaimed my aunt, "my poor poor Walter!" She threw her arms around my neck and looked at me earnestly, but she did not shed a tear, and I, aware that Sanford was behind me, gulped down the drops her careworn aspect drew into my eyes.—"I put off seeing you, Walter," she went on, "because I could not learn to smile, and—and—but Mr. Fielding has told you all; your uncle, Walter, your uncle is in prison. It was not *his* fault, Walter."

"We shall talk over these matters bye and bye," said I: "here is a gentleman—"

"Ah! Mr. Sanford," cried my aunt, "I hoped that you were gone. Helen is preparing my unhappy child for our reverses. If she sees *you*—'Tis hard to turn the sickly out of doors, but indeed you must go instantly. Marion is—Walter you know your sister is—" She had risen and sat down again, during this address, mechanically as it would seem taking from the

floor a pair of my uncle's stockings which she rolled and unrolled with a palsied hand.

Sanford was about to speak, but I prevented him—"Let *me* explain Sir. This person has amused himself with our credulity dear aunt ; he is of high rank—Lord Sanford—Why he condescended to falsehood we need not now discuss—He comes to make a signal reparation—to ask you for my sister Marion."

My aunt arose—held back her breath—the slight movement of her head which grief had given since I saw her, ceased. She looked steadfastly at Sanford—"Is this truth Sir, or have you been cheating that poor boy too?"

I thought the young man's forehead was a little crimsoned. He bowed, perhaps to hide his consciousness of the rebuke, and said with his usual easy confidence—"The announcement of my rank was perfectly correct Madam. I address you with increased deference in my real character. My friend Walter observes, very justly, that my motives for disguise need not be canvassed now. The present crisis will, I hope, apologize for the abruptness of this declaration.—Pray sanction my addresses to

your niece. I have no parents to control me. In evidence of my sincerity, I will request Marion to refer to your appointment the period of our union—to-morrow if you will. This is no place for ceremonial, and I know you will accord with me in waiving every thing that may procrastinate—When Lady Sanford is presented—”

“When Lady Sanford is presented,” exclaimed my aunt;—“Lady Sanford !”—She looked at the young man vacantly, as if he had proposed some monstrous speculation.

The self-contented smile of one who thinks he has established the justness of his own averment puckered Sanford’s mouth. He resumed—“I mean to travel with Lady Sanford for a year or two before I present her at Court or to my family: therefore a quiet ceremony will suit my views. Marion’s friends must perceive the fitness of permitting a short interval to elapse between our marriage and its announcement—My wife will become accustomed to her rank and—”

“Marion—your wife !” interrupted my aunt.

“Things fall on us so heavily that it is no wonder we are stricken dumb—But, God be thanked! He gave a power which has brought us through as great a shock as this!—Go—mate yourself elsewhere young man—there is no wife for you beneath this roof—Go Sir—When I thought you friendless I entreated you to go—now Sir I command you.”

Although anticipating this decision, yet my aunt's energy surprised me. Misfortune had stamped her features with a loftier character; her national saws and apothegms had given way to the concise and forcible delivery of one who bravely enters upon life's stern realities; her figure was drawn up even to the erect bearing of Madame Wallenberg, and the slight palsy which afflicted her, made her yet more venerable, while she calmly repulsed the astonished nobleman at the very outset of his remonstrance.

“I have no need to think upon this matter Sir—sometimes the right and wrong are twisted puzzlingly, and our wishes guide us false; but *here* the line is strait; my wish and Heaven's will agree. Now—to-morrow—in one year or

in ten, my answer is the same.—I have no need to think upon this matter Sir.”

Her firmness seemed exhausted ; she sat down and trembled violently. Sanford still maintained his ground, though looking crest-fallen and confounded. I turned angrily towards him, but Grace came forward now, and with a quiet authoritative wave made me fall back—“And when you go, young Lord, be sure you do not dare to come again.—Remember what the Madam told you—there is no wife for you beneath this roof—a Lord!—better you were an honest man!—It is remarkable I never trusted your sweet looks—there’s many a wasp’s sting in a honey comb.”

“Granny,” said Sanford, holding out his hand: “I am a debtor to your hospitable board ; will you be my agent here ?” He glanced towards my aunt. I reddened and again came forward.

“Put up your purse young Lord,” said Grace, composedly—“Would you offer the Geraldine an alms ?—May be your forefathers were beggars when his were princes!—The tree of your descent, mayhap, was not much higher than my own when his gave nestling to

the eagle. The parent of that poor, pale child, by rights was prouder than new-fangled Lords, for he was ten times ancier—Hold up your head, Walter asthore; don't look affronted; your father's son is as good as any *upstart* sassanach I guess."

Sanford seemed to ponder on some entangled half-effaced remembrance.

"Daylight is dawdling up the slope," said Grace; "You needn't stand there simmering mischief any longer; Driscoll's boat is ready for the great bay head, 'tis only waiting for my yarn and bundles—Come Sir; we'll stow you all together—your trunk is packed; one of our small *girshas* will run away with it; she'll be before you at the boat—Bid the Madam a good morrow Sir; if we never see your face again we owe you no ill will at all."

"Marion, I presume, should have a voice in this matter," said Sanford, addressing me; "let me see her for a moment."

"Not for a midge's moment!" returned Grace: "there's no use talking." Granny nodded at her contumacious opponent. The gesture was provokingly significant of cool repul-

sion—Sanford shook his head impatiently: his polished ease forsook him.

“*I will* see Marion!—*I will* see her!” he repeated, angrily.

“You shall not,” said I, advancing.

Grace, swift as the flash, stood between us in the sybil attitude she assumed in giving judgment—“See her! you had better see your winding-sheet!—approach her! you had better lay yourself between the four dark, narrow boards with the worm for your bride!—Marry her! the tree of your descent shall shrivel; its fruit shall be the blighted acorn!”

“A Cassandra, a Cassandra!” shouted Sanford, assuming the mock heroic. “Such presages engender black bile and crudities. I fly incontinently, this inauspicious shore.”—He bowed respectfully to my aunt, caught up my unwilling hand and pressed it gaily, then turning to our witch besought her blessing on his graceless head, threatening, if refused, to haunt the glen like the fumid essence of that Ballygobbin butcher who was gibbeted on Hungry hill in patriarchal days.—“Your blessing Grace—I’ll not go under ban.”

“God’s blessing on the back of you !” cried Grace—“May your foot find little rest until it treads the Saxons’ land !”

“Thanks Dame ; if we can’t have all we wish for here, we must teach ourselves to wish elsewhere.—Walter you’ll tell my lovely friends, at least, it is not *my* fault that I leave them *sans adieu*.—And now for Palestine.—Farewell !”

There was a dead pause when the young nobleman had departed.—I’d trust to a bean stalk for support as soon as I’d trust to him for truth !” said Grace at length—“We’ll watch him please the fairies.”

We heard her give a cautious tap at Helen’s door. A few whispered sentences were exchanged, and Granny’s active feet and hazel wand were swiftly pattering down the stairs. My aunt and I then fell into a melancholy discussion of events. I gathered from her little more than I already knew—My uncle’s entanglement was beyond all possible extrication ; his creditor had refused the only compromise that could be offered for restitution of the bond, and the sum was of such magnitude that the labour

of our lives could not work it out—"So we must make up our minds to a prison Walter"—said my aunt, "I mean your uncle and myself—He has been long enough deserted—It is a trial to think of him without a living soul to cheer him!" She went on hurriedly, as if afraid to trust herself with recollection—"Grace has promised to sell our little property; we offered it to that hardened man, but it was such a mite towards the debt that I suppose he wouldn't have it. Mr. Fielding says there will be enough to support us for awhile. He has hired a lodging for us in Cork, near the prison.—Think of his going to see your uncle Walter! Grace and he have managed every thing; I can do nothing now—nothing!—If there are cruel hearts my child, be sure that there are kind ones too."

"I shall work; I am resolved to work," said I.

My aunt surveyed me sorrowfully—"You work, my poor child!—you have neither skill nor strength!"

"I shall grow vigorous now," said I—"Love

for my uncle will give me energy. I have a plan already—Quinilla mentioned once that Mr. Bullock wanted an assistant in the shop—I'll offer him my services."

"You!" said my aunt, recoiling,—“you a shop-boy!"

“’Tis less degradation to be a poor shop-boy, than to be poor and idle, living on your little fund."

"But Quinilla is at Mr. Bullock's," said my aunt.

I winced a little—only a little—for when real misfortune comes, vexations are vexations merely—My reply was resolute—"I'll do any thing but leave you—Mr. Bullock lives in Cork: my uncle's prison is in Cork."

"The sullen looking jail!" ejaculated my aunt thoughtfully;—"it stands at one end of the main street; I remember it well, and its fellow prison at the other end. The poor debtor has but a blank look out between the iron bars!—But there is a sadder place than either, that I remember better—Oh! the heavy hours that I have passed there!—Heaven shield me from such another touch of heart-break!"

“A sadder home than even a dungeon!” I exclaimed.

“Sadder than even the home of the churchyard!” replied my aunt—“Ever since my darling lost her mind that mad-house is before me.”

I shuddered; my highest effort at self control, could hardly silence the expression of my horror—My aunt continued rather to apostrophize than to address me.

“It is before me day and night, that solitary house!—The grated windows; the narrow gloomy passages, so deathlike silent—not silent long—How awful was the opening of a door;—low cries and jibberings; songs that made you hate the name of song; you longed to stop your ears, but they were sharpened by the beating of your heart!—and then—to look into the cells!—wild starting eyes—human eyes, like a ferocious beast’s! mouths venting demon imprecations!—your blood would curdle, yet you were forced to listen and to look, as if a spell were over you—I saw one creature pinioned and then lashed: I fell upon my knees to beg they would have pity on her—they laughed and

told me it was good for her ! that stripes would bring her to her senses ! Heaven ! gracious pitying Heaven ! send some gentler guardian to the maniac's cell !”

I tried to stop such terrible details ; my tongue was glued.

“ Walter,” said my aunt solemnly, “ there are bitterer trials than imprisonment and poverty !—You are weak in body ; be not weak in mind ; be firm when you are called upon. Your uncle, they tell me, is bowed and broken—grief swallows up our years my child—We must leave you and your sisters to the fatherhood of God.—Promise me Walter, promise me that Marion shall not be forced into such a human den as I now spoke of.—Work—toil—beg—but keep her from the—”

“ Do not name it,” I exclaimed, shrinking back ; “ you will drive me—Marion will recover ; Fielding said so ;—Fielding has studied the disease ; he knows—”

“ He does *not* know !” said my aunt. She checked herself—“ And will you disappoint me, my child ?”

“ Marion shall not become the inmate of a

madhouse, while I have power to prevent it," said I.

My aunt heaved a long sigh—"Thank you Walter; the weight is off which crushed me more than terror of a prison. This injunction was always knocking at my heart; I have room for hope now—She may recover—nothing is impossible our good friend says, if we but use the means. Before this last relapse we thought her well, and were preparing for our journey. I was gathering up courage to go to you, my child, but not for the purpose of forewarning you. It was the offer of that gay young hypocrite that brought back the memory of errors committed with the best intentions. I was filled with fears of like weaknesses and like repentances. We should not dare to think the laws of God should be set aside for our sakes.—A wife—Marion a wife!—Sanford—Lord Sanford did you say?—How strangely things of long ago are brought before us sometimes."

She mused awhile, but seeing me attentive thus proceeded.

"Your uncle had once a friend, in character

not much unlike that young dissembler, gay and trifling. He married abroad, a fair, timid, creature, and brought her to Ireland. She was the pride of Dublin Castle; no one to compare to her for beauty, unless it might be a proud-looking cousin who came with her. The flurry of a court ripened the seeds of a disease that had remained dormant until then. The husband doted on her until the blight fell. She was stricken like *my* darling, and then the giddy man, thinking it a stain to be united to a crazy wife, made love to her cousin and sued for a divorce. His family had great interest at that time, so the divorce was patched up, and he married again. The poor maniac was confined in one of those scowling mansions I described to you—a better sort indeed, but bad enough—harsh keepers, no cordial-minded skilful help, like our good angel. Your uncle, who had been abroad, returned, and found her out. Chance had led me also to her Asylum—It was the first time he and I had met.—We nursed her, both of us—the heart must have been stone that would not bleed for her! She sometimes took Fitzgerald for her husband,

and me for her deceitful cousin.—How she would reproach us!—We soothed her with kind words—she became gentle and uncomplaining, and died soon after, a prayer on her lips.—The ear of God is open to the lunatic!” —My aunt covered her face and sobbed; the tears her own griefs could not draw forth, fell for her unfortunate friend, in whom I recognized my mother.

“And did the cousin never visit her,” said I.

“Never.—The cousin’s brother came from Germany when news arrived there of these unhappy accidents. He called your—your uncle’s friend out, for daring to offer to his sister while the first wife was alive.—He was killed, but that didn’t prevent the wedding. The parents never forgave their callous-hearted daughter; her downfall, however, was approaching; Ireland became distracted with rebellion; nothing heard of but exile, hanging and attainder. The husband was foremost of the disaffected band; he was proclaimed and apprehended. The lady wife considered his

sentence a disgrace and—"That's dame McQuillan's step, isn't it Walter?"

I would not wound my aunt by betraying that I saw through the flimsy veil which her kindness flung over our hapless destiny. She seemed quite to have forgotten the inklings she had given us of Julia Derentsi and Margaret Wallenberg. My father beyond doubt was the rebel subject of this tale which, in its leading points, agreed with all we had early heard of his patriotic venture and untimely fate. It was my mother's fate, however, that entered like a knife into my bosom. I groped for some excuse to account for the tears which came thronging to my eyes. The little narrative had recalled the family of Wallenberg, and I hastily enquired for the Baroness.—Had she been made acquainted with our reverses?

My aunt replied in the negative. She had thought of writing to her, but my uncle had opposed it. The Baron, she said, from some long-standing grudge hated the very name of a Fitzgerald. There was a pause at these words, and a look of disquietude cast at me. The speaker was too open to varnish a tale

smoothly, but I was purposely inattentive to the blunder, and she continued with something of her old quaintness—"No, Walter, we must not encrease the disputes between the Baroness and her unappeasable husband.—Misfortune softens some minds and sours others.—The early death of a favorite son gnaws at the man's heart—as to the rest, my child, the truly rich are those who can conform to circumstances, who, if they can't get grapes, can relish goosberries.—That's Grace's tread at last—it sounds encouraging."

"He's off, bag and baggage," exclaimed Grace—"so sprightly too! as if he only left Miss Quinny. He'll forget us in a fortnight, an irrecoverable sinner!—Well, we musn't feed on smoke; that won't help us to carry mill-stones. Mr. Fielding is coming here to dinner. I told him trouble-the-house was turned off. He looked astounded at the news. Katy and Breesthough are at logger-heads; so I'll kindle a fire, tidy up the parlour, and lay the cloth. We must look lively, and welcome the young Geraldine"

CHAPTER X.

Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band
That knits me to thy rugged strand!

Scott.

OUR evening passed heavily—how painfully deepened are dreary feelings by seeing a favorite spot dismantled!—My local attachments were intense; they had been moulded to my humble home—old furniture, like old family faces, encrusted my affections. I could not persuade myself that such feelings could be transferred to other homes. I surveyed the walls, the windows, the shelves which had

treasured my aunt's plate. Despoiled and changed in aspect as our dwelling was, I thought no structure could replace it in my love. The dull sound of the hammer, used to fasten down a box-lid, or to detach some ambulatory fixture; the rustling of our busy helps, foremost of whom, apostrophizing every article she touched, was Kitty Driscoll; the silence and inaction of those too heart-sick to mingle with the diligent; all fell on me so strangely that I internally assented to Kitty's protestation. "For a certainty we're swopped, every mother's son of us, and some one else is in our places!"

Marion's paroxysm had been succeeded by a sullen calm. Fielding considered it expedient to interrupt this brooding heaviness, and to prepare her for the approaching emigration by having our change of circumstances guardedly unfolded. Helen had been occupied with the disclosure: Marion's grief was passionate, but it was entirely directed to her uncle's desolate state. In a prison, a dark prison!—nobody to comfort him? Well, we were all, indeed, grown cruel!—What kept us from him?—*She*

was ready to go; quite ready. Helen's promise that we should set off in a day or two could not appease her. She walked up and down their little chamber, heaping question upon question. What kind of a place was this prison?—was it like those horrid dungeon-keeps in the old chronicles?—It was the hardest thing to punish people in such an inhuman way for nothing!—It was not her uncle's debt, and if it were, what good could be effected by shutting a poor man up until he paid a debt, who had been robbed of every thing he had to pay it with?—It was the oddest law!—she could not understand it.

Fielding brightened when Helen, with a trembling voice, repeated Marion's stormy ejaculations. "Her train of false conceptions is dispersing," he observed. "Reflection is at work; she reasons justly; compassion for her uncle will supersede compassion for her lover."

She entered shortly after, repeating her questions. She seemed dissatisfied with our explanations, regarded Fielding suspiciously, and watched every opening of the door. Yet she made no enquiry for Sanford, but would bewail

her uncle in her sweet broken accents, and then would seem lost in meditation. I was so engrossed by her while she remained, that I had no thought for the day's singular discoveries, but after she retired they came vividly before me.

My ideas of nobility of birth were chiefly borrowed from my ancients. It was a distinction which circumstances could not obliterate, an inalienable possession; therefore I, in my fallen state, was as responsible for that dignity of sentiment which ought to uphold it, and as much justified in all reasonable appreciation of its value as Lord Sanford. I had but vague conceptions of heraldic grades, or conventional titles; a patrician was a patrician, in my code of aristocracy, whether Duke or simple gentleman, each equal in inherent nobility of blood; and to such prerogative, and to the respect attached to it, Sir William Fielding's son was, according to my appraisal, as much entitled as his quondam friend. I confided in Fielding too implicitly, however, to forestal by a single hint a revealment which the dictates of the noblest sentiments, only, had deferred.

As he was unacquainted with the latent motives which dictated my aunt's refusal of Lord Sanford, he looked surprised on learning her decision. He had not perhaps expected this utter disregard of wordly advantage: he regarded his plain-spoken hostess with increased approbation, and seemed eager to defer to her judgment. The more I considered him the more satisfied I became that Sanford's insinuations were groundless. Fielding was much more observant of my aunt and Marion than of Helen: for the former he manifested the solicitude of a son; for Marion a never-relaxing watchfulness. Helen, comparatively, was disregarded: when he took leave his salutation to her was reserved, contrasted with his friendly adieu to my aunt. It was some abatement of anxiety to feel secure that this second entanglement was merely ideal, and I threw myself on my bed, determined to view all things favorably, and not to exhaust in painful surmise the strength of mind it was now so essential to husband.

Dawn was quivering through the mountain hollows when I descended to the parlour. Katy

and Kitty Driscoll were putting things to rights, and *colloquing* over the fore-day's incidents. In virtue of that marvellous expansion of ear which servants possess, they seemed perfectly acquainted with the circumstances of Sanford's dismissal. I could decypher Dame Driscoll's version of the affair by a comment which I accidentally caught—"You may talk yourself dumb, Mrs. Mulligan, but I say again an' again it is a crying sin that a real, real Lord should be sent off that way like a travelling-tinker. Bill is quite ashamed o' such behaviour." There was a wrathful flush on Kitty's face; she passed me unceremoniously, brandishing the screw-driver: but, conscience-stricken at her rudeness, she returned and with a lower dip than ordinary said, she was come to wait upon Miss Marion, and take her to the sheeling.

It was a fine frosty morning; the air keen and the sunshine exhilarating. I had slept soundly, and felt better than I had hoped to feel, wonderfully invigorated by the conviction that Sanford was gone. Taking a base advantage of Katy, who, apart from her peculiar territory, was packing, and muttering, and

wondering "if poor unlucky Cork was where it used to be," I gave a low whistle, which drew Breesthough from his kennel, and we set out together for the ruin. The animal shot off before me, never venturing to shew his tail until we turned the point.

My friend was writing in the oak chamber. We resumed the conversation of the preceding evening. I communicated my plan for earning at least my own livelihood, and perhaps contributing to the subsistence of my family. Fielding looked at me with undisguised amazement, combating strenuously, what he called this unnecessary degradation, and suggesting various nobler occupations, all of which however tended to remove me from those whom I held myself indissolubly bound to. His arguments would have been convincing to any one not weighed down as I was by the secret foreboding of a calamity more dire than want. It was in vain he represented that higher pursuits, in which I should have a *friend* to second me, would be productive of higher benefits to those I loved; my resolution was unchangeable; I insisted that no honest occupation

could degrade the mind ; my secret trembled on my lips when I thought he viewed me with displeasure ; but false shame kept me mute. It was a strange anomaly of my nature that I cared not to what humble craft my physical powers were applied, provided my mental faculties escaped humiliation.

We returned together to the cottage. It was not the absence of the usual cheerful appurtenances of our breakfast-board that took away my appetite, nor yet the strict frugality of our meal ; it was the emaciated form of my aunt. The comforts she had been accustomed to, were prohibited now, with the severest self-denial. It would break her heart she said, to partake of better food than poor Fitzgerald had doled out to him ; *she* could enjoy the blessed air, the thousand blessings of the free, which she had never valued properly until her husband was deprived of them—people should lose these bounties for awhile. to learn their just price.

Helen entered at the moment, looking pale and harassed—our question was simultaneous—was Marion worse ?

She had been talking all night of her uncle Helen said, accusing every one of ingratitude. —“ She that used to love me so well,” added Helen, “ she looks upon me now with coldness and distrust—I could bear any thing but that.”

When tears are unfrequent, we attach an importance to their cause and feel an emotion for the complainer which the weak-minded, who find a ready outlet for their grief in weeping, cannot call forth—Helen’s grief was too deep-seated to find relief in common-place lament. Therefore to behold *her* eyes dimmed, and the hand tremble which was extended for the cup my aunt had promptly filled, gave me an indescribable pang : she emptied the cup eagerly, as if to escape notice.

“ Marion is gone with Kitty Driscoll to the sheeling,” resumed Helen, brightening up on observing that my annt was viewing her with brimful eyes.—“ Grace holds a court this morning—some misdemeanour of our glen-boys—the leader of the riot is to be reprimanded publicly, and to be blotted from the roll of our assistants in removal. We thought the trial

might amuse Marion—What delight it gave her once, to sit in judgment with her Granny !”

Helen’s voice trembled ; her fine countenance was shadowed heavily ; she surveyed the desolate apartment with a look that said—“ we are almost at hope’s boundary.” But Helen never used high-spun phrases to point and sharpen painful circumstances ; she felt that misfortune firmly met, is half defeated ; a sudden smile conquered her momentary gloom, and while breakfast lasted she discoursed even pleasantly of our migration, as of an event which lost its harshness in the prospect of reunion with our uncle. Grace, she added, was so considerate as to leave her nothing to do that morning but to bid her little flock farewell, and to dismiss and satisfy our turbulent retainers, many of whom insisted on their right, as Clansboys, of marshalling us to the *Kingdom o’ Cork*. Katy had positively refused to be discarded ; she was too used to her own way to give it up in a finger-snap ; she had ’sponsible relations in the city ; she was allied to the great Keatings of Blarney-lane, and could live with them, and serve the master all the same : to lose her

labour would utterly destroy her health and ruin her understanding.

My aunt's eyes glistened, no longer sadly, as her darling gaily quoted Mrs. Mulligan.

Fielding, with an air half bantering, half serious, now introduced the vocation I had chosen. My aunt cast at me a wistful glance. Helen blushed deeply, I thought proudly, and by her looks assented to Fielding's expostulatory arguments. Our friend, calling me *an obstinate*, appealed more directly to aunt Fitzgerald, as he sometimes termed his hostess—Her reply was given in her own sober style.

“The poor can't choose professions Sir—Walter may be as good a man behind a counter as behind a velvet cushion. The noblest of callings was entrusted to the humblest traders; neither King nor Tetrarch was chosen for that office.”

Impressed by the seriousness of her allusion, we looked at each other—There was no reply. At length I broke the pause by enquiring the relative positions of my future residence and my uncle's prison—My aunt reflected for a moment—“Quinilla's friend lives in the main-

street, not many yards from the South jail; an honest kindly woman, but rather given to ape the habits of the higher classes. I see things clearer now than when my eyes were younger," she added in a lighter tone—"trials make rare spectacles."

Fielding left us to arrange the method of our journey: we were to begin it the next morning. I fell into a reverie which had our port of destination for its object. My preconceived ideas of civic grandeur were lowered by the strange nomenclature of streets and places.—Whenever fancy sketched a city, Athens was its type—Athens in the time of its supremacy—its topography was as well laid down in my mental diagram as were the features of the mountains which surrounded me—ports—gymnasias—temples—streets deriving their appellatives from Gods and heroes—My ear was wounded by the vulgar epithets of Cork localities—Black-pool—Blarney-lane, Hammond's marsh—and, worst of all, the main, (*hibernicé* the *mean*,) street—What grating sounds compared to attic sounds!—By favor of that faculty which makes our passage from sphere to sphere the transit

of a minute, I landed at the Piræus and was hurrying full speed to the groves of Academus—when Katy brought me back by clattering the tea-cups. Thus was I prevented discussing the advantages of euphony beneath the domes of Athens, unceremoniously translated to the wilds of Munster, and condemned to a dissertation on the beauty of alacrity, delivered by Mrs. Mulligan.—“ ’Tis a murther to murther time,” growled Katy; “there’s a regiment of empty jars an’ empty bottles to pack up—the coal-scuttle, two tinder boxes, (one as good as new,) the salting tub, (we won’t leave that behind,) an’ Breesthough’s kennel (the creature would be perished these pinching nights without it).—Stir yourself Sir, an’ don’t be dramin’ o’ Jerusalem!”

“Where’s my aunt? Katy.”

“Gone to bid the neighbours a good bye. I wish we could turn *somebody* into something handy. Help us with your own things any how. There’s a lot o’ linen to be *gothured* in the tumble-down yonder.”

The mention of the ruin brought my diary, my portable desk, and all my other valuables

to mind. I promised the alacrity Katy had admonished, and set off to rescue my memorials. My rookery looked sorrowful—my dear old haunt!—the ivy still would cluster round its walls, but I should never climb it! To keep off heart-ache I began to whistle, emptying the window-seat with a shaking hand. The papers were quickly lodged in their conveyance. I took up the gift of Madame Wallenberg; it recalled her last injunction; but I was more than ever bent on adhering to my humble course, and in no case would I force myself upon the bounty of a man who “hated our very name.” Indignant ruminations on this part of my aunt’s story were interrupted by a chaunt beneath the window.

I’ve not a poor penny I *can* call my own;
I’m naked, so wasted I’m shewing the bone;
My eyes are two wells o’ salt water, aroon!
Bad luck to our good luck! ’tis gone to the moon.

Not a joke are we left, not a tatter o’ fun;
Our honor is strangled, our courage is done;
The heart hot for fighting is chuck-full o’ frights;
Bad dreaming keeps off all our sleeping o’ nights.

“Slauveen!” I cried, shooting my head through the window-shafts.

“That’s I, but who are you, an’ where are you my little Leprechan?—have you a purse o’ goold for a poor boy?”

He raised his eye obliquely and espied me. I pointed to the ivy ladder, and, with the spring of a cat, he mounted to the chamber.

“Was it to use yourself to four bare walls with slits sky-high that you shut yourself up here then, Master Walter?”

“How is my uncle?” I exclaimed.

“Sore and shaken, sore and shaken,” he replied, heaving a sigh.

“Why did you leave him?—We go to-morrow.”

“An’ how do you think the Madam would climb knock-na-Dhioul without Lanty Maw?—That Lanty is a diamond Sir! he earns *his* bread and *my* bread without a thank to nobody. Mrs. Bullock dotes on him; he carries her like Buonaparte to eat gooseberries at Sunday’s well o’ holydays. ’Tis Miss Quinny only makes him kick—I’d not swop him for the fine Turk horse at Astley’s circus!”

“Circus !” I repeated—“have they games in Cork ?”

“Plenty, plenty,” said Slauveen—“whisk, brag, pick-up, nosey, beggar-my-neighbour, thumb-the-pip, commerce, and *casseeny*.”

I was confounded ; these modern games did not appear akin to the Olympic.

“Katy will kill me !” cried Slauveen,—“I’m come home half an hour, and she puts her claw on me already to turn forty jobs—‘pack up the dripping-pan, don’t forget the basting-ladle, look for the crooked kitchen spoon, ’tis always going astray ; where’s the snout o’ the old bellows and the handle o’ the pope’s head ?’ She’d fill her pockets with the cinders sooner than lave um after her !”

“And why did you desert her ?” I enquired.

“She bid me whip into the boat an’ fly like a spark to Bill Driscoll’s.—She wants him to coax the Ballygobbin carrier to take the dog-kennel to Cork.—She has a head, that Katy Mulligan, and so has Shannon steeple :—just think o’ the crazy dog-kennel dragging up the crookedest hill in Ireland’s four quarters ! I came away, just to get rid of her. Bill was out,

and so I thought I'd bid good bye to this old place.—What a merry day we had here *wanst* !”

“Will you leave your mother then, Slauveen ?”

“’Tis better to leave one friend Sir, than half a dozen. She wishes me to go. I’ll see her often. The poor master is so used to me ; he wants but little help indeed, so I hired myself to Mrs. Bullock, to clane boots and knives in spare hours. Mr. Bullock is come in for a fortune ; an uncle’s brother’s cousin’s son is dead. We’d get on charming if they’d only swop my master for Miss Quinny—she’d be no loss to no one, and she’d look as well in jail as any where. Shall I help to buckle up that knapsack Master Walter ; We’ll fling it into Katy’s hamper.”

I took it from him and slung it round my neck.

“Now,” exclaimed Slauveen, “you’re the very moral o’ Dinny Botherhead the poor scholar from Bally-Licky. Who in the name o’ the north wind is that scudding up the stairs ?”

Fleet as the wind, indeed, were the footsteps

that approached : the outer chamber was traversed rapidly, Johnny's throne surmounted with a spring, the curtain torn down, and Grace McQuillan, her ruddy cheek blanched to ashy whiteness, entered. The look she cast around pierced every nook of the apartment—"Not here, not here!" she ejaculated, striking her hands together with such a burst of wo that I was utterly incapable of questioning her.

"Mother," exclaimed Slauveen, "don't you know me mother?"

"Have you seen her?" exclaimed Grace, clutching my hand; "tell me you have seen her, and if I'm stricken blind I'll not complain!"

"Who mother?—Miss Helen—Miss Marion?"

"Marion, boy, Marion—They said she was with me—with me!—she's lost! she's lost!"

I passed her with a bound; I felt no lameness. I had the muscle of the tiger. I flew towards the mole, jumped into the boat that brought Slauveen, and with two strokes of an oar was pushed upon the bank beneath Driscoll's cabin. I tore through fern and underwood; the cabin door was fastened. I shook it vio-

lently. A girl who was driving goats stopped to stare at me. "Sure Bill was off a little after sparrow-call to Reen; he won't be back to-night may be."

"Where is his wife?"

"Gone with him sure: he took her in just at the point beyont. I was peeping at um through the fairies' eye and wishing I was wid um."

"Was any other person in the boat?"

"Two more; the lad that turned out to be a lord; he slept at Bill's last night. There was Grace, our witch, besides;—gone to the great bay-head to sell her bundles."

"How do you know they were going to Reen?"

"Sure Bill was going there yesterday, but he put back: the wind was blustherous he said."

It was enough; Marion *was* lost.

CHAPTER XI.

Farewell ye bowers
Where childhood played
Its sunny hours
In brook-laved glade !
Ye friends (from youth,
Whate'er befell)
I own *your* truth,
Farewell, farewell !

Frithiof.

I returned to the ruin—it was deserted—I ran towards the cottage. As I was crossing the causeway I descried a boat shooting swiftly through the passage to the outer bay. Fielding was at the helm. I made a frantic signal that I would go with him ; he waved one hand in the direction of the cottage, and with the

other pointed across the bay. I understood him; he was in pursuit of Marion; I was to console my aunt and Helen.

Just at the junction of the causeway and mainland a rider crossed my path, urging his horse vigorously along the bridle-road which wound round the lesser to the larger bay.—It was Slauveen—I stopped him and hastily imparted the information I had received respecting the route the fugitives had taken. He shook his head.—“All fudge, Sir!—Bill’s too ’cute for that: the thief that gives leg-bail will tell the cross he makes for, and run contrary-ways. My mother has found out that they have four hours start of us, and wind and tide into the bargain.”—He galloped off.

I hastened to our wretched home. Katy was standing at the threshold, straining her eyes in all directions. Miss Marion was no more gone than she was—What!—Miss Marion run away!—a burning shame to them that thought it!

I enquired for Helen and my aunt. Katy pointed to the study; they were sitting amidst the lumber, pale and still. They noticed me

only by a glance, and dropped their eye-lids like automata. I threw myself upon a chair; I would have given worlds to see them weep, to hear a burst of grief or indignation. The moveless faces were appalling; a cold stupor fastened on me.

I know not how many hours we passed in utter silence; Helen once ejaculated—"Did she mean to leave us?—without a tear!—no token of farewell—Marion!"

The day grew sullen; the wind swept through the ravine with a low portentous wail.—Was that the hearth round which we used to draw with joyous alertness?—A dreary whistle was all that it gave forth. My aunt shivered and raised her heavy eyes to the clock, which Katy had wound up that morning—it struck—mechanically I began to count—some of its ponderous embowelments gave way; the wheels and chains rattled, and the clock hammer, like a funeral bell, kept up a lengthened chime, tolling at short intervals its week's reckoning. A rustling drew my attention to the door, and there stood Mrs. Mulligan, aghast, and staring at the mysterious, ever-

sounding clock, her limbs so stiffened by sheer horror of the incessant peal, that the fire apparatus she had collected to shed a little comfort on the scene, fell from her expanded apron. Helen drew a stool to my aunt's feet and chafed her hands. The clock, having told its sonorous tale, was silent. Katy fluctuated a moment between superstitious and good-natured impulses, looked again at her haggard mistress, and advanced; yet ever and anon, as she blew a cheering glow from the fast kindling embers, she would cast over her shoulder a glance indicative of wonder, anger, and dismay, towards the awful time-piece. This accident saved the clock from being dragged up Knock-na-Dhioul with the dog-kennel.

We drew my aunt's chair to the fire and faltered words of hope.—We had such confidence in Fielding—they would be overtaken; they *must* be overtaken. She faintly shook her head, and shewed her dissent by exclaiming—"How shall I meet Fitzgerald without that child!"

Katy laid the cloth; we did not lift the

solitary cover; we could not even venture to exhort my aunt to eat—"Where is Grace?" I whispered.

"Gone with Mr. Fielding," replied Katy; "that witch of Endor will downface one that Kitty and Bill Driscoll have coaxed away their mistress for that young pretender. I'll wager any thing Miss Marion will be found somewhere about here, with the fairies."

It grew dark. We addressed my aunt with a hopeless entreaty that she would go to bed. Her answer was a prayer for her benighted child. We joined in her orison, and then decided on passing the remaining hours of night together. Helen pillowed the great chair for my aunt; I refreshed the fire. We sat anxiously observant of voice or footfall; and thus we passed that tedious dismal night, our heart's throb quickened by a gust of wind, or by the clicking of the death-watch.

Towards morning my aunt sank into a broken slumber: as the cold light of a winter dawn fell upon her face it looked wan and colorless: we dared not move for fear of waking her. The embers struggled faintly

through the day-light, which now made visible all the details of a scene so comfortless. Had years passed by since we assembled here, the spirit of joy so active in us that we could have scaled the house-top?—It was impossible that months, months only, could have changed the aspect of all things!—The pallid wrinkled sleeper scarcely had preserved a lineament of the active, florid housewife. Helen was altered fearfully; beheld through the misty dawn she had the shadowy loveliness of something visionary. My thin and jaundiced hand was evidence of my own decay. My uncle was in prison—and where was the gayest of us all?

The falling of a pebble arrested my attention. Helen's eyes were closed—I crept to the window and cautiously unbuttoned the sash—a letter was slid into my hand; the bearer was muffled in Fielding's cloak; it was Grace. The letter addressed to me, was dated the preceding day, signed "W. Fielding," and ran thus.

"I am still in pursuit of Lord and Lady Sanford; they were married an hour since; it is essential I should see them. If your aunt

persist in following without delay the plan I laid down for her journey, do not dissuade her. The conveyances to Cork are arranged—I write while horses are preparing—You will find Slauveen at Bantry with my carriage.—If possible I join you *en route*—if not in Cork.”

“Farewell,” was half scratched, and in further proof of the writer’s haste the letter was unsealed. It had fallen from my hand when I came to the announcement of Marion’s marriage. The sudden gloom which darkened all my faculties sufficiently revealed, by its contrast with my previous state of comparative tranquillity, that I had founded a hope on Fielding’s interference.—He had been one hour too late—“One hour only!” I exclaimed—Helen approached, took up the letter and read it. She folded her arms with an air of quiet resignation, resumed her seat beside the slumberer, and shaded off a sun-ray which struggled through the casement.

My aunt awoke ; she looked at us, and misinterpreting our silence, hastily arose—“Well, my children, we will go ; my husband must not be deserted longer ; Marion is taken from *our*

care, but not from the care of providence. That treacherous young man is the victim of his own deceit !”

Helen’s countenance became expressive of astonishment ; she seemed pondering on the ambiguous words ; they insinuated a retribution which *she* might not consider due to an act, rash and unauthorized, indeed, but still dictated by affection.

“ Come Helen,” said my aunt ; “ come Walter ; our tales of prison horrors have prepared us for a prison—my sweet Marion would have helped to brighten it : be cheerful for her sake children.”

I perceived she had no hope of recovering Marion, and therefore gave her Fielding’s letter. Her decision was quickly made : an hour afterwards we were treading our way towards the boat which was to convey us the first miles of our melancholy course. The children of the glen accompanied us to the water’s edge. A numb silence usurped the usual noisy acclamations. My aunt leaned on Grace, I supported Helen. Even Katy, with her led-captain, Breesthough, bringing up the rear, failed to

elicit a mark of admiration. The glen-boys walked two and two, as in funeral procession. Sobs burst from Helen; my aunt's fortitude gave way when she was strained to the faithful heart of Grace McQuillan. Rugged hands were eagerly thrust forward—one last shake—one last look into our faces!—Little fingers clenched our garments; the boat pushed off, and the wild, emphatic cry which floated after us, sounded like the death-keene.

Blind Johnny was not at the parting, but as the boat approached the ruined walls of my *Balclutha* the minstrel was discovered seated on a crag beside his little guide. At the signal of our approach he caught up his pipes: the first notes of his farewell were drawn out with tremulous fingers; he broke off, drooped his head, and passed his hand across his blighted eyes—The oars were silenced—"Bless ye, bless ye!" cried the beggar;—"bless ye, for ye have pitied the aged and the blind!"

"Bid the boy lead him to the cottage," sobbed my aunt; "Grace will weep with him for comfort."

All the play-haunts of my happy valley,

dingles, coves, heath-banks, headlands, seemed rushing to bid me a good bye, and then as swiftly to fly from me. As the last familiar ridge flitted past, I buried my face between my hands and felt as if the fibres of my heart were rent—what !—should I never again behold my pleasant places !—Surely we should “meet as heretofore some summer morning.”

The rocks retired more and more behind us : though only in a wider basin, I thought a world of waves surrounded me, and hastily I shut them out again.—Let no one blame me : in local attachments I had the sensitive weaknesses of a tender woman—I would have felt enamoured of novel objects if I could—Was it my fault if my heart ached ?—I tried to awaken curiosity, a spirit of adventure, but whenever I surveyed the unknown sea, a thought of the ‘burn’ we had ‘paddled in so merrily,’ would send coward tell-tales to my eyes.

I was so completely abstracted that I mistook the stir and buzz of the little town we landed near, for the turmoil of a city, and thought we were in Cork, though Slauveen, who received us at the head of a creek, insisted

that the Ballygobbiners, excep to' fighting days, were just as tame as ducks without their heads. A resuscitated fossil creature, loosed from its ante-diluvian masonry, might have felt as I did; when I found myself borne along in the vehicle Fielding had assigned us, it seemed to me as if our orb were swinging loosely in the firmament.

Helen drew my observation to the scenery, which in many of its features resembled the harsher districts of our glen. The wild and savage looked trebly wild and savage beneath the leaden clouds which rolled like solid masses parted from the gravitating mountain—heath-banks clad in winter's russet, bluff walls of rock bristled with leafless thorn-trees, goats peeping from sterile heights, and some lone hut testifying at intervals of dwellers in the wilderness.—The more disconsolate grew the scene the more it encreased in interest; jolts and jars, the dangers of the route, were unattended to; but when (emerging from a gorge) we commenced an ascent which made foot progression often necessary, I waded upwards

through an expanse of melted snow, with some consciousness of physical distress.

We resumed our carriage. From certain most emphatic jerks and plunges I inferred that we had reached the skull-capped road of Phil McGun, but Slauveen protested it was *ages off* behind us. At last we bowled on freely. I hoped at every turn of the road we should encounter Fielding, but posts were reached, and horses changed, and dusk came on apace, without an incident. My aunt made enquiries and found that by using diligence we might reach Cork that night: horses were in readiness at the summons of Slauveen; refreshments tendered. We proceeded with an expedition which, compared with our outseting, appeared magical. At last we caught sight of twinkling lamps—(Helen thought them will o' the wisps)—the horses clattered over pavement—we were driven through guttery streets, lined by houses of capricious fashion, from which projected Helen's will o' the wisps, shedding faint lustre. I blinked, in order to clarify a dusky building adorned with columns, but a

woman bawling "*Burn* oysters" through the carriage window, stopped my critical researches. We alighted at a door which opened to the thunder of a brass machine. A girl, the converse of a Sappho, viewed us with a tragic stare, clipped a thief from a candle, blew her fingers, and ushered us up stairs.

From an apartment on the landing, lighted by slender moulds, advanced two ladies, splendidly attired—Quinilla introducing Mrs. Bullock.

CHAPTER XII.

Corcach,* “ non e piu com era prima !”

CORK ! thou art no more what thou hast been !
—Thou hast thy city domes and thy suburban
palaces, commercial domiciles and classical
cassinos ; thou hast thy ample quays and solid
bridges, thy flesh and piscatorial shambles ;
thou hast thy glorious haven ;—nay thou hast
still thy pinguid civic rulers, thy learned
doctors, cunning artisans, and locust Lazzaroni.

* The Irish name Corcach, (pronounced Curkig) is said to signify a marshy place.

—But how is the spirit of thy people changed !
—Where are the dry-drums and supper-parties
Quinilla used to grace ?—whither are thy
veteran card-players translated ?— Gone !—not
an effigy is left, not one among the rising gen-
eration to resuscitate the glories of great and
little *cas*.—Gone are thy social rubbers, sub-
verters of scandal, smoothers of wrinkles and
asperities !—Thy green-cloth covers are pasture
for the moth ; thy cards are desecrated, trans-
ferred to juggling gipsies, cards which to
shuffle gracefully was reckoned an accomplish-
ment.—Where are thy ball-rooms and thy
phil-harmonics, Cork ?—Thy festive spirit is
‘ in the deep bosom of the ocean buried !’—
no one dares prattle of ‘ its whereabouts !’—To
dance is dissolute, to sing a profanation ; the
torch of Momus is extinguished, the melody
of the land is gone.

Are they too ostracized, those bristly natives
of the sty which, dead and living, used to grace
thy streets ; the dead with drooping snouts and
throats slit longitudinally, stretched out in gory
rows upon their narrow biers, (a touching spec-
tacle !) outside the slaughter-stores of great O

C——; the living porkers, (denizens as free as bodies corporate and not less constitutional) keeping the path with philosophic gait; inflexible to the upsetting of less phlegmatic passengers.—Hast thou located in some dungeon sty thy tax and rent defrayers ungrateful city, hast thou?—Where *are* the pigs? an echo answers —“where?”

And where are thy odoriferous lanes, O Cork! carpetted with clammy mud, uniting with brief interval thy pleasant promenades, the Mall and Mardyke?—where are those steaming purlieus, unconscious of the scavenger, tenacious of the dews of Heaven?—One of them I well remember was entered by a narrower lane, through which two rats abreast could scarcely find a passage; and *there* was planted, whilom, propped against the wall, an aged Belisarius; at sound of footstep casting up his filmy orbs, importuning the passenger—“Pity the blind—pity the blind!” The mournful recurrence of the supplication harrowed me, particularly when I lacked a halfpenny. Another of these alleys contained a fragrant shop which canonized the manes of Sally Lunn, inventress of

those luscious cakes Mrs. Bullock used to butter for her parties.

Where are ye, too, ye well stocked tenements flanking these prolific lanes, from whose social garrets opposite neighbours could salute, with cuffs or with embraces? Ye gutters redolent, and teemful of miasma, where are ye now?—Gone, ye all are gone! and on your site a proud usurping street sweeps impudently glorious of its upstart domes!—Chapmen now hold sway, haply, on the very ground where once the *high-born* clans of the *Mac-Arthy* Desmond, disdaining vulgar traffic, had lived, and loved, and starved—and given bloody noses to each other.

And ye, too, are departing piecemeal, ye wondrous domiciles, illustrative of more varied architecture than ever Vitruvius' brain elaborated; ye nondescript erections of zig-zag pattern and multifarious height; ye scotched and notched and scalloped gables; ye balconies, friendly to kind intercourse, shaming the Venetian.—“Poor Cork,” writes Mrs. Mulligan, “is set a going like the bog of Allan, and running *solus bolus* over Patrick's bridge and up the dyke.”

This digression is extorted by a comparison of what Cork now is, with what it was at the epoch of my first sojourn there; "when the good old customs were kept up," saith Katy, "when pigs could walk the streets without being kidnapped, and cards brought aged folk together, and younger folk could use their legs and lungs and not be excommunicated."

Had I finished my last chapter with others of my actors than Quinilla and Quinilla's friend, I might not have sung this *prosy* monody on Cork; there is still, I apprehend, some leaven of my old aversion working, to detain me from our cousin. So many strange, and sorrowful as strange events, had been crowded within the interval of our separation, that memory was affected by it as by the lapse of years. Quinilla had been, not expunged indeed, but partially effaced; and I stared as at a new-created cousin when she stood before me. That mouth, capacious of trope and metaphor, was pouring forth its treasures, profitless; a thousand wheels were rumbling in my ears; I could hear but scraps of the elegant eulogia pronounced on Mrs. Bullock, of whom my furtive glances gave me

only the assurance, that her stature was prodigious, her nose flat, her mouth wide, and her beard prominent. At length I grew accustomed to the din, and conscious of my cousin's welcome, which had, first, been lavished on my aunt and Helen.

"Sit down, Watty, sit down my man.—He's so modest, Ma'am," (addressing Patagonia)—"And how do you like the city, dears?—a nice change for you!—Sister, here's a chair—Helen, sit upon the sofa.—Why then, what kept you all so long?—we have trudged here every evening for a week, thinking you'd like a little news. They are building a new jail—two new jails—my friend Mr. Bullock has been left a fortune. Theodore is gone into the army; looks elegant in regimentals—*Kit Hutchisson* got him a commisson. The actors are coming—not yet though; but there's wax-work. Snug lodgings don't you think *Laurentia*?—three very decent bed-rooms, this room for a parlour, the use of a kitchen, a coal-hole, and a little pantry—this table drawer is lined with tin for tea and sugar—so convenient, isn't it?—I hope Katy and Mrs. Green won't quarrel though—

both a little snappish ! Patricius has got himself a fine berth !—ten *pound* a year at Mrs. Bullock's !—I gave him *such* a character ! You'll be frightened at the rent ; we thought it high, considering poor Fitzgerald's situation. Fielding *would* manage it his own way though, and so.—But where, in the name of goodness, is Miss Marion ?”

Fatigue, grief, the unexpected company, and the abrupt question, iron nerves only could withstand.—My aunt fainted.—Quinilla kept up a bitter squeal, while, assisted by her friend, we bore our beloved relative to a bed in the adjoining apartment. The prompt measures of our stalworth, good-natured ally, restored her. Helen represented the state of my aunt's health as an excuse for dismissing visitors. Mrs. Bullock said, “to be sure” to every thing, shaking me so vehemently by the hand, and reiterating so many kind “good byes,” that I began to think we must have known each other in some pre-existent state. Quinilla, for once, was guilty of discretion and good-nature ; she kissed her sister, bidding her be comfortable, that Theodore would take care of *her* at any

rate ; then promising to come to us the morrow, soon as she could *get her things on*, she departed, stopping, however on the landing for a slight *confab* with Mrs. Mulligan—Katy, in a stage whisper, briefly imparted the leading circumstances of Marion's flight, keeping Sanford's rank concealed, perhaps in pity to the deserted maiden. Our cousin's comment insinuated a compliment on her own sagacity—"Didn't I tell you, Katy, it would come to this?"—In sooth Quinilla was incorrigible ; the misery her egregious folly had entailed, had not made the slightest impression on her mind.

We were now called on to oppose my aunt, who insisted on visiting the prison without delay. She could not sleep, she said, with such a weight of untold wo upon her. Our secret wishes prompted us to concede, but we observed that the tottering invalid was obliged to sit down twice before she could reach the chamber-door, and we besought her to postpone this visit until a night's repose should nerve her.—"Repose children !—repose ! with a few yards only between me and my poor husband !—I must go—I must !"

Slauveen however cut the matter short—Neddy Nabbs the turnkey wouldn't as much as hear of such a thing. Neddy's motto was —'honest people should lie down with the lamb'—therefore *his* flock was locked up safe at sunset.

When I retired to my chamber the oppression, which the day's varieties had driven off, returned with fourfold intensity. I should never more see Marion!—The longer I reflected upon her character, the firmer was established the opinion that deceit must have been practised to subvert principles so fraught with home affections. Even in her wanderings these powerful tendencies were manifested. The evening I last saw her she had angrily arraigned our seeming apathy towards her uncle; could she at that moment have contemplated forsaking the very person she so bitterly bewailed; I wearied myself with conjecturing the scope of those arguments that had been so promptly effective in annihilating such deep-rooted attachments.

While absorbed in meditation, I was insensible to noise, but the moment I addressed

myself to sleep the clatter of carts and pattens rang through my sensorium. Sleep!—sleep should never more be sealed by the low bleat, the singing of the brook, the pigeon's love-note!—The dreams of my woods and wilds should never more entrance my thinking power, nor imagination, wakeful and alert, bear me to the porch of my philosophers. I was thenceforward to dream of city horrors; and when fatigue overpowered clamour I did dream of them; of chaffering in the mart, of crying oysters.

I was awakened by shouts beneath my window. Two root-women were wrestling valiantly; the strain of muscle was sublime; their classical equipment gave the full play of brawny arms and legs to the spectator: they grinned, and struck and shook each other, with gladiatorial earnestness; their tongues elaborating anathema that none but an Irish pate could have engendered.—“Go it beauties!” cried a boy, kicking down the baskets of the pugilists, who, bequeathing their roots and battle to the mob, instantly united in pursuit

of the offender. The crowd caught up the spoil, clamouring; a pitched engagement was the consequence, and a shower of onions enlivened the scene of action.

Dim panes and foggy atmosphere gave me but partial glimpses of Cork's indigenous matinal amusements, and of the architecture of the city's main-street. It was of the order *composite* I could discern, but the models it was copied from, my charts of ancient cities did not furnish. The builders seemed to have evidenced the national love of fun in their inclination to the outrageously grotesque. An opposite shop-window, decorated with three golden balls, and jutting proudly from its neighbours, became the object of my contemplation.—What costly merchandize!—surely Cork was the emporium of the world!—I no longer marvelled at the splendour of Quinilla's trinketry—" 'Tis finer than Ballygobbin," exclaimed Slauveen, who now entered with my trunk and noted the direction of my eyes; "but wait till you see the Grand Parade, an' the statue o' King George, an' Miss O'Toole a

strutting on it, with one of every trinkum in the pawn-broker's forenent you, stuck upon her."

I hastened down stairs; my aunt, observing that Helen "looked like a ghost," pressed her to the breakfast she scarcely touched herself, and scolded me for wanting appetite, while she paced the room in a fever of impatience.

Marshalled by Slauveen we hurried to the prison, too earnest to heed the crowds that jostled us. A few minutes walk brought us to a massive building with thickly grated windows, most aptly characterized by the epithet *sullen*; it formed the sides and superstructure of a deep high gateway, under which we passed. Slauveen stopped before a door ominously secured in the side-wall of this gloomy porch;—" *Uskil a dhurrus*,*" and a smart tapping, were answered with a promptitude which proclaimed a disposition in the warder friendly to his visitor. The bolts revolved alertly; a peering, cautious, curious face, well ploughed with wrinkles converging

* *Uskil a dhurrus*—open the door.

round a mouth that seemed on the perpetual snigger, was thrust beneath my sister's bonnet, the offensive action modified by a twenty times repeated welcome.

"How is the masther Neddy?" said Slauveen, as we mounted a steep narrow stair.

"How would he be but hale and hearty in such an' ilegant retirement honey? yourself is looking poorty poorly from the air an' exercise I'm thinking."

The dialogue was continued in an under tone until we reached a landing, from which diverged dark passages studded with bars and padlocks. —Doors became distinct: I thought the fastenings of that which Neddy stopped before, an age unclosing—at last it creaked; I pushed it in, and saw—Marion!

My uncle's arms enfolded me, but a film shut out every one but Marion—I heard broken ejaculations, sobs and questions. Marion called upon our names with the loudness of delight: astonishment was so all-subduing that I could not return her caresses: she was now hanging upon my neck, now upon my aunt's, now locked in the embrace of Helen.

“ Oh ! I thought it a thousand years until I saw you all again—Didn’t you guess that I was coming here?—You didn’t believe that I could leave you for any one but my own, own uncle did you?—How horrid to lock him up in such a place—what hearts they had who built it!—No wonder he is ill ; it would kill *me* to look up day after day towards that grating, and feel that I was alone, quite alone, with nothing of Heaven but this scanty light—Don’t weep aunt ; he shall not stay here another day, no not an hour ! Lord Sanford promised to pay the debt ; he promised to take my uncle back to you ; he promised to build a castle in the glen ; and so—I married him.”

The chimerical hopes, I had conceived from her return to us, fled—Fielding’s information was established—I echoed my uncle’s deep drawn sigh.

“ Don’t sigh so Walter,” resumed Marion ; “ Helen does not sigh—Ah, Helen ! I never knew how much I loved you until I left you—I forgot your conduct to poor Sanford—Poor !” “ she repeated ; “ he is not poor ; he is a rich

lord, Helen!—rich enough to make our *poor*, *rich*!—and I—I am happier than ever. I have no weight upon my heart *now*; Lord Sanford will recover; no one can accuse me *now*.”

My uncle exchanged glances of mournful meaning with his wife—“You love this young man I hope my child?”

Marion looked surprised—“I said I loved him when I married him; I would not have deceived him, even for your sake, uncle—How sad I felt when Kitty told me he was sent away unkindly!—how glad I was to meet him!—Love him!—indeed I love him!”

“Where is Lord Sanford, Marion?” said my aunt.

“Gone to meet you; he rode off with Mr. Fielding; we did not know you had arrived—I was here before the light could find its way through those sulky bars this morning.”

“Ah Fitzgerald!” said my aunt, “these things are new to you—I couldn’t write about them, because I didn’t know myself two days ago that our young guest would turn out a—”

“Your aunt and I have many things to talk

over my dear children ;”—said my uncle hastily, —“ Walter take your sisters to their homes ; you shall come to me to-morrow.”

His commands had always met unquestioning obedience, but we surveyed, lingering and with dismay, the spectral form that bent to bless us —The door was closed behind us, and the harsh barriers were replaced.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Why how now cousin ? wherefore sink you down ? ”

SLAUVEEN emerged from Neddy’s lounging-room when we reached the stair-foot—“ ’Tis *she*, in earnest,” he vociferated : “ that liar Nabbs downfaced us, ’twas nothin’ but a lady ! ”

“ Whisht you *gomeril*,” whispered Nabbs, bustling forward, “ you’ll be transported ! ’tis Lady Sanford ; she come here in a coach, you fool, and two fine footmen ! ”

“ Slauveen ! ” ejaculated Marion joyfully.—

“ Didn’t I tell you ’twas *herself* Neddy Nabbs ?—let us out man.”

“ Mightn’t that *distressful* coach be tired o’ waitin’ Misther McQuillan? ’tis standing ever since the peep o’ day under Goggan Barry’s sign, across the bridge there; sha’n’t we call your honor’s footmen Ma’am?”

“ I would rather walk,” said Marion.

“ But your honor’s footmen will come for orders,” remonstrated Nabbs; as he reluctantly applied his ponderous key.

“ Then order um to drive to where they come from,” said Slauveen; “ do you think ’tis Mrs. Nabbs you’re talking to?”

We proceeded homeward; Marion, full of her new project, planned out a cot and garden for every pauper of our glen: bogs were drained and barren land converted to rich pasture by her talismanic tongue: a romantic site was fixed on for the embryo castle; the days of ancient chronicles were to be revived, the days of feudality and chivalry, of Kerns and Galloglasses, of Fileas and pensioned harpists. Slauveen was nominated leader of the military band, blind Johnny the castle bard, and Driscoll the castle seneschal: Grace should indite and execute the law, the Brehon of a Mote which

should overawe the vassals of the seignory : Katy and her *Sub*, the turnspit, were appropriately commissioned ; dog-wheels, by infrangible edict, were prohibited ; and Lanty Maw, caparisoned like the palfrey which bore the lady Isabel, first wife of Amory St. Lawrence, was appointed sumpter-horse general, and destined to bear all the brides in our vicinity to Ballygobbin chapel.

The walk from our cottage to this castle should combine every variety of scenic beauty, should wind through woods and fairy dells, dotted with mossy seats for Walter : but not a stone of our cottage was to be displaced : the study, indeed, should seem built of books : she knew she should prefer it to the castle library. The headland and the dear old ruin would be our haunts, as formerly : the little weavers should again assemble ; no longer stinted to a solitary implement, each child should have a spinning wheel and wool cards.

Before Marion had sketched half her plans Slauveen was thundering at the '*rapper*' " 'Tis not so large as our Hotel," said Marion, eyeing the mansion of Mrs. Green ; " What a noisy

place this Cork is ; don't you wonder Helen how people ever thought of building towns—shutting themselves in, from skies and trees, with smoke and ugly houses.—How glad we shall be to go home again !’

Marion’s perfect security of our restoration to *home* gave Helen confidence ; her cheeks glowed, her eyes sparkled, as the prospect of a dreary town-existence was obliterated ; she became as skilful in reclaiming waste and quagmire as her sister, as expert in castle-building ; and both sisters were diligently erecting turrets, cottages, and barns, when Fielding, followed by Lord Sanford, entered—Helen flew, both hands extended, towards Fielding, but retreated on seeing his companion—I grew feverish—Sanford advanced without the least embarrassment, saluting me as eagerly and frankly as if our brotherhood had been established under kindred impulses. Helen drew back when he approached her, coloring deeply, but Marion flung an arm around her husband’s and her sister’s necks, compelling them to an embrace.

Sanford addressed us as if we formed an undivided household, fondly and playfully intro-

ducing Lady Sanford. The constraint at first was painful, but I know not how it was, although I continued silent, more cheering thoughts began to weaken my forebodings. Marion's recovery seemed no longer doubtful ; I had observed her, cautious of admitting hope, but my closest scrutiny did not detect the least recurrence of her malady. Enthusiasm had ever heightened all her sentiments, had ever characterized their tone ; a fervor which in others might have appeared fantastic, in Marion was simply natural ; it was an outlet to her exuberant affections, and was not less intense a year before than at the present moment. Those unsettled glances, sharpened tones, and swift perturbed transitions—(which even to think upon quickened my pulsation)—had given place to her naturally sportive and ingenuous air, to her laughing eye-beams, and to that low persuasive accent which made her influence so absolute. A happy sigh was bearing off one half my cares—I looked at Fielding ; he was sitting at a table apart from our little group apparently occupied in writing, but occasionally fixing on Lord Sanford—who was gaily assent-

ing to every demand of Marion—a look so reprehensive that my hopes were clouded.

At last the direct question was put by Marion—should not her uncle be liberated immediately.—Sanford paused ; Marion tremulously repeated her enquiry—it was evaded—she persisted—might she go at once to pay the debt.—I apprehended a painful *disembroglio*, but Fielding, laying down his pen, said quietly, “Some days must unavoidably elapse, Lady Sanford, before arrangements can be entered on for your uncle’s release.”

Marion’s eyes flashed angrily : she turned to Helen, and I caught the whisper—“That man is always interfering Helen, I do so wish that he would go away.”—She stopped, for flippant feet were tripping up the stairs.

“Are they at home Patricius? is my sister better Katy? Mrs. Green is gone to market I suppose ; how do they like the lodging? am I draggled?—such streets! gutter two inches thick ; the jaunting-car is coming for me ; shew Mr. Dionysius Bullock into the back parlour.” Quinilla fizzed into the room : she drew up at sight of Marion and Lord Sanford, compressed

her lips, curving them disdainfully, and made the bend of a grand Duchess.

“Well, Helen I had no notion of meeting such good company—*Some* people have little or no shame left ; *I* couldn’t shew my face under such circumstances—where is my poor sister ? quite upset I dare say.”

She spoke in a whisper made convenient to our ears ; Helen replied that my aunt was at the prison.

“Quite right,” observed Quinilla, “quite right ; every *proper* wife should share her husband’s lot, however hard it is. I myself could starve with the man I love ; and yet—I mightn’t choose to *run away* with him. Poor Laura has no more cause to plume herself upon the match she made than other folk ; although Fitzgerald’s grand relations cocked up their noses at her ! wouldn’t condescend to own a man, indeed, who married an O’Toole ; but I despise the upstart set !—they’re not in *Tyger Nack*—Monimia Bullock dotes on literature ; she has all the Irish annals at her fingers’ ends.”

Our cousin had been standing while she

elecutionized; Sanford arose and offered her his chair, gravely enquiring for his friends the Bullocks. Quinilla surveyed him from head to foot, looking dubious whether to bow to him or box his ears—"Dear me! you are wonderful polite Sir."

"Your chair is on my gown, Quinilla," said Marion.

The coolness of this remark, which manifested complete indifference to the previous spiteful annotations, encreased our cousin's bile; magniloquence and majestic airs dwindled into vulgar common-place. She turned sharply on our friend,—“Well Mr. Fielding, have you found a mare's nest? where's the money to come from for diet and lodging, I'd be glad to know? I and Théodore are willing to support our sister, but we wo'n't put up with her maintaining other people's children.”

“We will not be a burden on your kindness Miss O'Toole,” said Helen.

“Oh, Helen! *you* are welcome to remain with Laura; and Watty too, poor creature! Mrs. Bullock has something in her eye for

him ; but *interlopers* !" She glanced at Marion, " interlopers may choose to make long visits for convenience. Mr. Sanford seemed flush of cash at all times ; he can't be at a loss for lodging and a dinner, though 'pon my word, he dined quite long enough at our expense."

" Dear Madam," said Lord Sanford, " your frankness is so refreshing in these sophisticated times ! vulgar minds are scrupulous of mentioning obligation—Have you made out the bill ?" He unclosed his purse and bent inquisitively to the confounded damsel.

" This beats cock-fighting !" cried my cousin, jumping up as if electrified—" 'tis well for you, my chap, my brother isn't here !" she snatched the purse, and positively flung it in his face.

" That creature should be strangled, Walter," whispered the young nobleman ; " any one has a right to abate a nuisance."

" None of your whispers," screamed Quinilla ; " you are all of the same kidney. I can make you laugh, may be, at the wrong side of

your mouth—you had best be quiet.” The rattling of wheels interrupted her.

“Pray compose yourself, Miss O’Toole,” said Fielding.

“Me! I’m composed enough, I thank you, Sir; ’t isn’t vagrant trampers can provoke me—not they indeed—what a fool I am!”

“How *can* you libel such capacious intellect,” said Sanford.

“Hold your sneering, sir, or else—” The wheels came to a full stop; so did our cousin; she shook her flounces—“’Tis the Bullock’s jaunting-car; I forgot it was to call for me—and Dionysius too in the back parlour! what could I be dreaming of? run down Watty, ask him just to come up stairs—no don’t—open the window can’t you—stop—you *are* so awkward—city windows don’t go with buttons stupe.”

Up flew the sash: Quinilla looked out and uttered the monosyllable “What!” in that long drawn cadence peculiar to a state of inordinate surprise—“Why then what’s that?” she added, “in the name of the nine wonders! A chariot and laced liveries! the very chariot, as

sure as fate, that Mr. Bullock saw passing the shop door this morning: the horses started at the sign. Good law! the footman is jumping down—he's knocking at this door why!—there's a tattarara!—Some of Fitzgerald's quality relations after all—where's Patricius? Molly Green's girl is always going to the door with a dirty apron on into the bargain!"

"Lord Sanford's carriage," cried the man.

"Lord Sanford's carriage," cried the girl at every stair she mounted; "Lord Sanford's carriage," she repeated, sticking between the door and the door-jamb, and modestly displaying a tattered petticoat by tucking back the vituperated apron.

"There's no lord here," exclaimed Quinilla, "the girl's bewitched!"

Sanford with an inimitable air of sarcastic pleasantry led my sister forward;—"This is *Lady* Sanford, Madam; therefore I will assert my right to be *Lord* Sanford, even at the risk of impeaching Miss O'Toole's veracity."

Quinilla glared; moveless and rigid; stiffened by amazement; jaws fallen, eyes fixed on

nothing. "Salute your cousin, Lady Sanford." said the young nobleman, bending to the nymph.

"*Lady!*" ejaculated Quinilla, tittering hysterically; "that's a good joke, upon my word and honor it is!—a *lord!*! a *lord* indeed!" she laughed again so frightfully, that Sanford, with an expression of dismay, tendered her his salt-bottle.

"I beg you'll not alarm yourself *my lord*; I'm not to be your laughing stock a second time—a lord! a chariot too! Miss Marion knew what she was at: a lord! *I* was never fit to deal with tricksters."

I did not think it possible that my sister's innocent face could have expressed the ineffable contempt which aggravated her retort.—"And yet how dexterously you imposed upon us all cousin, when you deceived us into the belief that Lord Sanford was in love with you."

"Nobody was speaking to you ma'am—how did I know he was a lord? a lord! I won't believe a word of it."

Helen looked alarmed, and in an under tone assured Quinilla of the truth.

“’Tis true Helen is it? *may* be so, and *may* be too his *Lordship* shall learn, to his cost, that I might have made a better Lady than *my Lady* there.”—She cast an incomparably spiteful glance at Marion, caught up her muff, and flew off, *sans adieu*, forgetting the jaunting-car and Dionysius.

Lord Sanford, too polite to descant on our kinswoman’s absurdities, protested he had a world of letters to despatch, and hurried Marion to the carriage, promising she should return early on the morrow. Fielding departed for the prison shortly after, and Helen and I were left to talk over the late incidents, and to indite a page or two of text-hand, with the news of Marion’s restoration, for Grace McQuillan.

CHAPTER XIV.

"He hung the instructive symbol o'er his door."

A FEW days elapsed, varied only by visits from the Sanfords and visits to the prison —Marion, too sanguine and too confiding to doubt the establishment of her Utopia, had always some new project to discuss with Helen. The latter, into whom my comments upon Sanford's character had infused a suspicion of its hollowness, listened with some abatement of assurance, particularly as my uncle, in our prison conferences, when Marion was not present, spoke decidedly of awaiting the period which the law appointed for the enlargement of the insolvent

debtor. This prospect of his ultimate release, to those who had contemplated a life-long imprisonment, would have opened consolation, had he not persisted in rejecting all amelioration of his captivity.—“He starves upon the jail allowance although we’d trust him sooner than the bank,” said Neddy—“It murders Mrs. Nabbs to see him wasting.”

My aunt expostulated, even angrily. The reply was characteristic and decisive—I will not lessen by a scruple the little you have left : I have been culpably selfish in—”

“You selfish !” interrupted my aunt—“you, who gave your all away !”

“Therefore was I selfish. There is no merit in gratifying a favorite virtue at the expense of another not so pleasant. Profuse benovolence may be termed amiable, but I have learned from a monitor we equally revere, that our very virtues are pernicious if indulged beyond the limits of a wise discretion. When generosity trenches upon justice it deserves chastisement ; there was an inexpressible moral weakness in the act by which I risked the maintenance of those most dear and worthy with

my own, because I should have felt it painful to say *no* ; therefore I repeat that I am not to be classed with the unselfish."

"But scanty, meagre, prison fare!" faltered my aunt.

"The coarsest fare is less undermining to my health than would be the daily thought that I was in my own person contracting another debt. I *must* incur this obligation for those whom I have rendered destitute, but never for myself, never for myself."

Although this resolution of my uncle filled me with anxiety, and made me nervously eager for employment, yet I felt a negative satisfaction in reflecting that when the bubble which held poor Marion's hopes of his deliverance should burst, *he*, at least, would not be disappointed. Meantime our table was profusely served; profusely, according to our ideas of the parsimony we ought to practise. Our debt to Fielding would swallow at least one half the fund which Grace had scraped up from the relics of our little property. My aunt remonstrated with Mrs. Green on an expenditure as far beyond her wishes as her means, insinuating that

she was poor, and must look for other lodging, or be allowed to furnish her own board—Our landlady made light of these misgivings—'Twould all come strait as Cook-street *she engaged*; every body knew that Cork flogged Europe for cheap living; 'twas beautiful to take a turn in the meat-market and see the lovely beef and mutton selling for a song; her canary bird would eat as much as we did; 'twould all come strait as the South Mall.

Helen thought our landlady a gem—"Ah! Helen," said my aunt, "Mr. Fielding is the gem; but this must not continue. Poor Grace hid all her little savings in my trunk; should we consume in idleness the bread of the industrious?—and yet"—her pale face crimsoned—"yet Helen I'd rather be obliged to them, than to the man who could beguile my simple child with falsehoods!"

"You do not think it was deceit, all deceit," said Helen—"You do not think his love for Marion is pretended?"

"No; but will it last? will it stand the test—who can rely upon a man that has no consciousness of wrong?—Such are your uncle's

words, children, and you know how merciful Fitzgerald is. I saw, myself, that this young man could act and speak a lie without compunction ; therefore I knew he never meant to settle in the glen.—*He* liberate your uncle !—He might with safety have proposed it—Fitzgerald would scorn to say ‘thank you’ to the worthless !—If Marion finds out that he breaks his word ’twill crush her—’tis this alarms us—my trustful, generous child !”

“Does Mr. Fielding think Lord Sanford dissembles still ?” said Helen, trembling ; “does he think my sister’s husband wicked ?”

“Wicked ?—I did not mean to say that he was wicked, child. I never knew more than one, that I could truly say was wicked ; but Lord Sanford is a will-worshipper—he has no moral mile-stone to keep him in the road of rectitude ; no monitor to strike the warning when his whimsies lead him wrong. He is not false for the mere love of falsehood, but because he finds it pleasanter to tell lies than baulk his inclinations. Look at the mischief he has done—yet did he ever say ‘’twas my

fault'—did he ever even seem to *think* it was? Hearts are broken by the reckless, the unscrupulous, the insensible, as well as by the wicked—I can vouch for that; but this young man, besides, is full of self-conceit—he thinks every thing he does is right because he does it.”

“But Marion is so unassuming, so full of tenderness for others, so forgetful of herself—he must admire her character, and we are so apt to imitate those whom we admire. Even you, aunt, you that we always thought so good, you say that you are much better since our acquaintanceship with Mr. Fielding.—He has improved us all indeed. Grace said she never thought there could be such a man.”

My aunt, who when excited always paced the room, at these words stopped abruptly, sat down, and seemed stricken with some new disquietude. She fixed her eyes on Helen, and said, after a long pause—“Have *you* guessed, Helen, for *I* have, that Mr. Fielding is not the person Lord Sanford's convenient tongue represented him to be?—I mean as to his sphere in life.”

“ You do not suspect that Mr. Fielding has deceived us also !” cried Helen, glowing with the earnestness of her enquiry.

“ He never professed that he was anything, therefore he never cheated us ; but the fellow-traveller of Lord Sanford cannot be the poor man we imagined him.”

“ Well, aunt, whether he be poor or rich his merit is the same ; he is our friend and our adviser still ; he saved Walter’s life and Marion’s ; he seems the instrument of Heaven ;—if he be rich, does that make him less admirable ?”

My aunt’s gloom encreased—“ I should not be surprised to learn that he is as high in rank as his companion, Helen.”

“ That is impossible,” said Helen quickly—“ If he had a title he would have sanctioned Lord Sanford’s falsehood by permitting himself to be addressed as *Mr.* Fielding.”

“ He might have generous motives for concealment,” said my aunt ; “ and without a title he might still be a man of rank.”

“ You would not love him the less for that ?” said Helen—“ I am quite sure *I* could not.”

“ You would not *like* him the better for his

rank?" enquired my aunt, with pointed emphasis.

"Better!" repeated Helen; "I do not know that I *could* like him better."

My aunt looked still more restless—"Rank makes wide distinctions Helen. A poor artist may settle where he pleases, but a man of rank has claims—has—Few, very few of elevated station yield to their fancies like Lord Sanford, Helen."

"I do not think that Mr. Fielding is a man to yield to fancies," replied Helen, with perfect ease of manner—"Do you suppose he means to settle in our glen?—He liked the scenery I know.—Ah! *we* can never settle there!" Her eyes filled with tears, but my aunt's cleared.

I had been silent during this dialogue, fearing some reference which might compel me to corroborate the surmise as to Fielding's rank.—"Whatever our good friend may be," resumed my aunt, "it behoves us to acquit us of our debt and to economize. I should be happier, children, if our food were simpler; it makes me so remorseful to think that we have such substantial fare, while Fitzgerald is living

on a crust. I see no prospect of our earning any thing; Quinilla promised to look out for plain work—you know I'm fond of work—but I have scarcely seen her."

We would not grieve my aunt by mentioning her sister's visit and outrageous conduct.

"And Nancy Bullock, too; she used to be good-natured; at least when she was Nancy Carberry. I thought she would have helped her poor old schoolfellow to earn something. 'Tis comforting to see you smile so Helen—have you dreamed of a fairy-hoard my darling?"

I had before remarked that when our exigencies were touched upon, Helen's countenance wore an air of calm assurance; but she was silent. I left the room and hastened down stairs, lest the impulse should subside which spurred me to make, at once, the effort I had for many days revolved. Our landlady was chaffering at the door for eggs. I enquired my way to Mr. Bullock's.

"'Tis only thirteen door-steps off; go strait along towards South gate, but don't go under it, strait as a die, until you see a man, sky high, with a hammer an' a bellows an' a crook-

ed leg, standing upon nothing—that's the house."

The Irish, through vigour of ideality, jump to their conclusions; they imagine it a waste of words to be precise, because they estimate your quickness of conception by their own, representing often, as in this instance, the *sign* for the thing signified. With Mrs. Green's perspicuous direction I hurried on, gaping upward for the aeronaut, and soon espied the Bullock mansion, identified by a dingy monster posted mid-air between the basement and the house-top, "with a hammer an' a bellows an' a crooked leg, standing upon nothing," but secured by a massive iron girdle in his aërial station—" *Ex pede Herculem*," said I—"and why not Vulcan?"

A window bayed out at either side of the shop-door, above which the lame son of Juno flourished his Cyclopean emblems, and just within the threshold stood the "ould brass Dutch girl holding two lanky sixes," to which Slauveen, in days of eld, had likened little Berga. A Brazier's merchandize is not interesting. I grew faint-hearted as I glanced

around the murky shop which I had predestined for my habitation—"Is Mrs. Bullock here?" said I, addressing a stubby, thick-nosed, little man, whose head, clothed in a buckled wig of rough red, stuck just above the counter, and casting the while a rueful look towards an inner door, half glass, through which the comfortless array of a small, dark, fireless room was visible.

"You must go round to the *hall*-door if you want my wife, Sir," said the little man.

I made excuses, and did as I was bid, palpitating. Slauveen himself, in holiday attire, admitted me. It was reception-hour, when the services of our joint domestic were required at Mrs. Bullock's. I hardly knew him; his hair was powdered; he wore a livery coat, a black cravat, and white silk stockings. Instead of the usual free, affectionate address, licensed by his fidelity and fostership, he bowed, took my hat, unquestioned told me the ladies were at home, in an accent quite unlike his own, tripped up stairs before me, and, ere I could take breath, he had strutted into a gaily furnished room, announced Mr. Fitzgerald, and shut the door

upon me, as if conscious that without this precaution I would have disgraced myself by a retreat. Mirrors and busts, vases and pictures were quivering around me, as if reflected in a troubled stream. The pressure of a ponderous hand, and “how d’ye do then?” seven times repeated, dispelled my vertigo. I was dragged towards the fire place, thrust into an arm chair, and introduced to Miss, and Mr. Bullock junior, before I could pronounce a word, or recollect what had brought me into such glowing latitudes.

The lady of the house still manifested her overpowering friendship; she stirred the fire, pushed my chair onward till the fender stopped it, knew that I was frozen when I was positively roasting, enquired for my aunt by endearing epithets, hoped that beautiful soul, my sister, and Monimia would soon be intimate, apologized for not having called to congratulate us upon the wedding—She had waited till the week was out; was dying, so was Monimia, to see Lady Sanford. Miss O’Toole had told them she was quite as handsome as her sister, if not handsomer.

Reply was useless ; it would not have been heard ; I bowed as fast as I could to every condescension ; at last my courtesy was tired out ; no Mandarin could have kept up the nodding, so I refrained, and fixed my eyes upon the carpet, wondering somewhat at the last paradoxical assertion, nay almost doubting its veracity. But Mrs. Bullock had quoted truly ; a hitherto undiscovered peculiarity in our cousin's character became gradually revealed to me ; she was tenacious of *our* consequence because she thought it propped her own, and, however 'splenetic and rash' in her domestic dealings, she had puffed us to her city *coterie*, (where my sisters could never be her rivals,) as miracles of loveliness and literature. Quinilla must have walked off her rage in her transit from Mrs. Green's to Mrs. Bullock's on the day of the discovery, for Marion's marriage with a Lord was boasted of, I found, with all the pomp of the O'Toole hyperbole, to that family and their acquaintances.

I could not muster courage to explain the purport of my visit before the younger Bullocks, who I felt were staring at me, though I dared

not reciprocate the compliment: but Dionysius, luckily remembering that he and Monimia had promised to walk up the dyke with Miss McCarthy, relieved me of this encumbrance. My wishes were then unfolded in language as lucid and coherent as I could command. Mrs. Bullock looked exactly what she said she was—amazed—“Goodness gracious!—the brother of a lord!—Miss O’Toole, indeed, *before the late affair*, had spoken of my *classics*, and had requested a situation for me in her household, which nobody in Cork was competent to fill—But the brother of a lord!—the brother of a lord!”—Though utterly unable to connect my classics with the sale of saucepans, a certain benignant character in the aspect of my new acquaintance which countervailed her threatening dimensions, led me to persist in my request, and at last I succeeded tolerably, in making her comprehend that the brother of a lord might prefer, to being a lord’s pensioner, a life of humble independence. The explanation which ensued, in turn excited *my* amazement. As to a shop assistant she must put her *reto*, as Monimia called it, upon that. Mr. B. intended to

take the managing part of the concern himself provided he could find a clever secretary. He liked the counter better than the counting-house. The Birmingham correspondence rather hampered him. She had conceived from Miss O'Toole's description that I could unite that office with those of tutor to Dionysius and occasional preceptor to Monimia.—Di. was a *leetle* slow at Latin, but Monimia would make up for it; she was an astonishing girl! quite beyond Cork masters! such a capacity for languages! mistress of French; had learned up to the *propria quæ maribus* in Latin, and knew every letter of the *Grecian* alphabet; but she wanted to talk *classics*, the very tongue, Quinilla said, was at her cousin's fingers' ends. She, Mrs. Bullock was too well off, and thought too much of talent to stint in salary; their relation had left them quite a noble fortune; but for Mr. B., who had a passion for making money, she would give up business and change to Patrick street, or the South Mall, or over the new bridge, or somewhere equally *recherché*; she was so harassed by living in a tho-

roughfare—Now, indeed, 'twould be more bearable; my aunt was a favorite old schoolfellow; for that matter she liked every one of us; as for Miss O'Toole, the house, Monimia said, was like the den of Erebus without her. There was only one thing more! she had heard we were quite intimate with a German Baroness, and Monimia had such a taste for German—Could I teach it?

Though confounded at the turn in my road to industry, I was too elated to falter in reply. Had I been called on to instruct the great and little B. into the bargain I should not have demurred. German, albeit I understood the language indifferently well, I could not teach; I assured my patroness, however, that my sister Helen spoke it fluently.

“But Miss Fitzgerald of course will live with Lady Sanford?”

Helen would not quit us, I was sure.

“Well,” Mrs. Bullock said, “she thought it the oddest thing, the very oddest thing, a lord’s connexions should dream of earning a livelihood, when they might be sure either of grand

matches, court places, or a pension. Even Miss O'Toole had never spoken on the subject of my tutorship for the last few days."

I again reverted to my love of independence.

"And very praiseworthy it is to give up such fine prospects," she replied. "For my part but for *your* sakes I am glad enough of it—quite a *bonus* to pick up people so uncommon clever!"—She supposed, though Miss O'Toole forgot to mention it, that my sisters could recite, and dance, and draw, and sing, and play on the piano, and could do frost-work, bobbin-work, bead-work, and embroidery.

I changed countenance; Helen knew none of these accomplishments.

"Nor even the Lord's wife?" cried Mrs. Bullock, staring.

Marion was even more ignorant; she knew no language but her own.

"Well, well, 'tis very vexing, but don't look chop-fallen—Monimia wants no teaching in these matters at all events—I defy any one to beat her in—'To be, or not to be,'—So our bargain is concluded—I'll speak to Mr. B. about the terms--we gave *Jacotin* a guinea for

six lessons—then there's the secretaryship and German—But are you sure Lord Sanford's sister-in-law will condescend to teach?—it looks so *out of character*."

She seemed bent on thinking this a moot point. I promised that Helen herself should guarantee my assurances, and took my leave. Slauveen presented my hat at the stair-foot with the bow of a drill-serjeant, never relaxing his unusual silence. I began to think it could not be Slauveen; we seemed total strangers; I loitered, as he held the door, obsequious.

"Patrick!" said a voice which issued from some ground apartment—"Did you hear the bell, Patricius?—open the door for Master Watty—Make haste, will you."

It was my cousin—I darted to the street—The little brazier stood at the shop-door, directing a man upon a ladder, who was furbishing the nose of the huge bellows Vulcan wielded. He nodded graciously—every thing in the Bullock mansion looked propitious!

CHAPTER XV.

A bag for my malt, a bag for my salt,
A bag for my leg of a goose ;
For my oats a bag, for my groats a bag,
And a bottle to carry my boose,

My noble master your charity!

Beggar's ballad.

I WALKED on briskly ; I trod on air, buoyant at a prospect which a few months back would have filled me with despondency. The sun-ray unvalued in fair weather is priceless in a storm ! Ranks of folios took their place in my imagination, instead of rusty frying pans ; a warm light apartment instead of a dark fireless one ; but above all arose the prison table comfortably served, and my uncle's sickly face glistening with satisfaction.—How Helen

would rejoice !—her capacity for teaching would now be made available.

Gold, the new object of my speculation, floated in my vision—"A guinea for six lessons !—then there's the secretary-ship and German !"—I repeated these words aloud, again and again ; doubtless to the amazement and amusement of the passers by.

Meantime I unconsciously traversed treble the distance between Vulcan and Mrs. Green's. At last I looked around, but looked without recognizing a single home-mark. I turned, and stood still ; there were many shops on either side, but not a pawnbroker's or brazier's ; before me was an ancient building—ancient I inferred it from its dusky hue—My ideas of Cork genius became wonderfully sublimated as I surveyed this structure—massive steps led to an open vestibule, through arches adorned with columns—above were windows, with pillars and pilasters supporting a balustrade and cornice—a cupola, surmounted by a ball and dragon, crowned the whole.—I was wafted to the fanes of my philosophers.

"Is that a Lyceum, or Cynosargus ?" said I,

addressing an old crone, who sat behind an apple-stall hard by the venerable fabric, sucking an inky pipe.

“Sell sarges !—get out !—no nor hucaback—Is it purtending not to know the ’change you are?—Not know the Royal ’change *ershishin* !—Jillan,” she bawled to a sister Grace—“Jillan look to your *allycumpane* ; there’s sharpers on the leg !—ax the name o’ Castle Street there, too, my chicken, and filch a Kerry all the while ?—Your road is paved to gallows-green my ’cute one !”

Had I been detected in pocketing her kerry pippins, I could not have felt more thoroughly confounded : my feet and the paving stones seemed to incorporate—Not daring to incur rebuff the second by asking my way home, I peered around for some more accostable informant, and half way down the street just named, I espied a carriage standing before a bookseller’s shop ; it was Lord Sanford’s—A lady at the moment issued from the shop and sprang into the vehicle—I had not wit enough to hail the coachman as he was whirling past me—Sanford, looking from the window, ejaculated

“Walter!” and while the footman alertly turned down the step, my libellous Pomona pursued me with blessings and supplications—“Help—a poor struggler jewel—the skies be your bed—treat the lady to a *tissy-worth* an’ good luck to your innocent face!” Marion laughed and threw her a sixpence—“Get up Jillan,” said the hag, “and *slewder* her out of another tester can’t you!”

We drove off. The carriage was crammed with books, but nothing could divert my eyes from Marion. The fashion of her dress was changed, not to the mode of trimmings and pompoons, but to the chaste, and simply elegant attire which identifies itself with grace and beauty—Madame Wallenberg’s dress was a model for dignified old age, Marion’s for artless blooming womanhood.

“Well Walter, what do you think of Lady Sanford now?” said Lord Sanford, viewing her with a look of proud idolatry.

“I like my old fashions better,” said Marion, “but Lord Sanford thinks they did not suit a Marchioness elect.”—she laughed—“I am to be a Marchioness one day, he assures me—

How we shall astonish Grace! I wrote to her this morning; she is to have our glen-boys ready for a grand procession, and such a feast in the old ball-room! I gave directions about Johnny's throne.—Do you think we shall go home *very* soon Lord Sanford?"

"Certainly," he replied, with an air half caressing, half ironical.

"I have purchased a store of books," continued Marion—"These are for our younglings; these for you, Walter—Here are Helen's;—a pharmacopœia and portable laboratory for aunt—legends of saints for Granny—Look at *my* miscellanies; what a pile! poor Ireland's biographers and aspersers, from Cambrensis down to Doctor Ledwich!"

"And for whom are those you are so fondly hugging?" I enquired.

"For my uncle—We are going to that horrid prison—Have you seen Mr. Fielding lately Walter?"

"Not this morning."

"I attack him every day, but to no purpose," resumed Marion—"a perverse intolerable man!—so silent too; it would be a little satisfaction

to *hear* that things were in a train—But lawyers are shocking men to deal with Lord Sanford says—so dilatory—*do* tease Mr. Fielding Walter—make him tease the lawyers.”

I cast a reproachful look at the young nobleman ; he received it with irritating graciousness, enquired for Helen, and invited me to dinner. I declined. He pulled the check-string, and asked whether I meant to accompany them further. The carriage was now opposite the lodging : I had been at the prison before breakfast and wished to communicate my plans to Helen ; therefore I alighted. “Tell aunt she may expect a summons soon for home ;” said Marion : “tell Helen I have such antiquated chronicles for her !—Good bye ; remember you beset that Mr. Fielding—Sha’n’t we be glad to see *Sliebh Ghoul* again !”

Neither Helen nor my aunt was in our sitting-room. I sat down to think over the substance of my negotiation with Mrs. Bullock, but my recent interview was uppermost, and Marion’s happy face, so full of confidence that the husband would fulfil the lover’s promises !—How long was this delusion to be permitted

to exist?—Were we all cowards?—Was there no honest and indignant tongue to represent the truth? Fielding almost countenanced Lord Sanford's imposition by his evasive answers to Marion's enquiries—Did he palter through apprehension of the consequences?—He had perhaps detected some lurking symptom of her malady, which disappointment might encrease.

There was one strange incongruity evidenced by Marion's present conduct, which at this moment forcibly struck me as not harmonizing with her native intelligence of character. None of us had been more acute than she had been in observing the wants of our poor mountain neighbours, none more quick in suggesting expedients for their assuagement or removal; yet (although I was satisfied we were, enthusiastically as ever, the objects of her solicitude) I could not blind myself to the remarkable want of perception she now evinced in points she had once intuitively comprehended. That my uncle's agent had absconded she knew, but that we were in consequence reduced to poverty, nay, (but for the man she so obstinately disliked,) to beggary, she seemed to-

tally unconscious. This result would not have escaped her natural acuteness, hitherto so active in penetrating the necessities of those she loved. As to Lord Sanford, his carelessness on this head was quite in keeping with his character; the satisfaction of refusing his assistance was denied us.

These reflections were bringing me, by slow degrees, to the issue of my forenoon negotiation, when the knocker preluded a visitor. A hasty enquiry in Fielding's voice was followed by his entrance—Of late his aspect had been clouded, his manner reserved and taciturn, but to day he looked more sanguine of good, than even Marion in her bliss-inspiring credulity.—I surveyed him with a vague impression that something extraordinary had happened; it was not merely satisfaction his countenance expressed, it was suffused with that elation which even the most disinterested manifest when themselves are involved in the good tidings they announce—He took my hand but seemed unable to explain himself.

“There is *really* a prospect of my uncle's release,” I exclaimed.

“And is there nothing else—do you give no additional meaning to my joy?”

“Marion—you think that Marion—or perhaps Lord Sanford may—”

Fielding shook his head.

“Well,” said I, “my guesses go no further.”

“Did I not so thoroughly understand your whimsical compound,” said he laughing, “I should suspect you of double-dealing—Have you not guessed—that I love your sister Helen?”

I leaned upon the window-frame and hid my face; the weight of that one changeless grief which had been shifted for awhile, again pressed heavily. Fielding sat down and proceeded more sedately—“Accident, Walter, made you acquainted with what I neither endeavoured to set forth nor conceal—my real position in life. By the same accident you were satisfied, of course, that I never meant to impose a counterfeit upon your family. My father is a Baronet of ample fortune; I am his only son, his only child. This latter circumstance renders me doubly responsible for filial duties: to waive the claims of a wise and generous parent

would not be to advance my suit with Helen. Every particle of our intercourse has been imparted to Sir William Fielding; I have sketched every feature of your characters impartially; I have unfolded your distresses and involvements; I have confessed my unalterable attachment; but at the same time I expressed as unalterable a determination to abide by the judgment of my father.—What I have suffered since my letter was despatched, sufficiently proves that I did not rashly affirm my happiness rested upon his decision—he *has* decided—read his reply.”

I took the letter: its contents irresistibly fixed my thoughts.

“ My dear Son,

“ I remember my tremors when I addressed to *my* father the confession of a youthful attachment. His answer to his only son was succinct and emphatic; it relieved me of suspense, at least, upon the instant. I will not test *my* son more severely. Had I a doubt of that high integrity and clear-sighted intelligence

which is a pledge to me for your just delineation of the Fitzgerald family, although I might not say, as did my father on a similar appeal—‘Come home I command you and give up this ridiculous affair’—yet I would say ‘be cautious; examine further; suspend your declaration.’—But I know your fidelity to those principles which control inclinations unsanctioned by conscience and sound judgment. Therefore, I say ‘win for yourself the wife, give me the daughter, long sketched in my mind’s eye as a comforter for both of us.’ Your portrait of Helen, corresponds so accurately with my mind’s eye maiden, that were I of the order marvellous, I should assume your mountain-witch had had a hand in it. Give me a daughter, William, of that favorable stamp, physical and moral, of that active, enlightened intellect and strait-forward virtue, which may be my security, (in as far as foresight can secure us,) for descendants healthful and right-minded. I have no ambition for grand alliances, still less for rich ones, although my first wife was a Baron’s daughter with a plantation for her dowry. *Your* mother was a poor gentlewoman

but she bequeathed more riches to her son than all the wealth of both the Indies!—Wealth should be distributed; we have an overportion; if other treaties fail, a mortgage on my West-India property must set at liberty that fine old Irishman. But remember how often you and I have numbered prudence among the cardinal virtues; I may have many grandchildren; I wish them to be peaceful citizens: I would not give the young rogues reason to accuse their father's father of having compelled them by a foolish transfer of their property to take up arms against their fellow men, or, worse than all, to marry, for mere lucre, some imbecile creature."

I read the letter twice; and, without the least consciousness of what I was about, quoted aloud the passages which so singularly bore upon the interdict that severed us from conjugal ties.

Fielding was too much absorbed by his own gilded hopes to notice my abstraction. When I laid down the letter he resumed—"I would explain myself instantly to your uncle, but he is a man scrupulous of obligation; therefore,

and also in obedience to my father's wishes, I would make another attempt at compromise with his creditor before I venture my petition. Your aunt has too much sturdy frankness to be entrusted with our secret yet; a feather's weight of disappointment might irreparably injure Lady Sanford: her cure has been too sudden to be complete. I am averse from dissembling, but by silence alone we may prevent an immediate return of her malady, the only casualty I seriously apprehend; for (as there is no radical disease) prolonged tranquillity of mind will secure her recovery. She will not enquire by whom her uncle's freedom has been effected, and she need not be informed. The other giddy promise of Lord Sanford I must persuade him to fulfil; he may be induced to return, at least for a few months, to the glen, by my representations of Lady Sanford's very precarious state of mind. And now, Walter, will you aid me in my plan to form of your relatives and mine one household?—Marion's schemes might be effected without the Genii of the lamp and ring, though not exactly on her feudal plan. Our patriarchs, would nei-

ther of them, willingly give up their native land, but they will interchange long visits.—Helen—but now that I have come to her at last, I can proceed no further without seeing her?”

It would be vain to attempt describing my sensations—a deadly sinking of the heart grew more and more oppressive as my noble friend described his schemes for our felicity. Weak, nervous, morbidly sensitive, I found myself suddenly called upon to make a superhuman effort. The disorder of my mind became apparent: I struggled to speak—“You are agitated, Walter,” said Fielding; “I have been too abrupt; go to your chamber; compose yourself; our landlady informed me that Helen was in her own apartment: suspense unnerves me—will you say I wish to speak to her immediately?”

Suspense!—A hope flashed across me that she might not consent—“Does Helen know that you love her?” I exclaimed.

“That I love her as a brother; no more.”

“As a brother—would you be satisfied with that?”

Fielding paused a moment and then said emphatically, "*no.*"

I darted from the room. There was still a chance I might be spared my dreadful task. I knocked at Helen's door—"Walter?" she exclaimed, "come in." She had been writing; her little table was strewn with papers; she turned upon me a face so eloquent of some high-wrought inspiration, and yet so calmly beautiful, that my troubled feelings were corrected.

"Did my aunt return with you?" she enquired, pushing aside the table. "You have had a long day at the prison, Walter—I shall go this evening."

"You keep a journal too," said I, evading a direct reply; "my aunt is not returned, but Fielding is below."

"I am glad of that," said Helen, quickly rising, "for I want to speak with him before aunt comes home—I have a project—Walter you look agitated—What has happened?—Marion!"

I tried to detain her—she passed me hastily.

“Helen,” said I, “Helen, stop; stop one moment.”

She returned; I was silent; she gave me a reproachful look and left the room—I heard her address Fielding; they continued to converse. I roused myself by a violent effort, ran up stairs, and shut myself into my chamber.

CHAPTER XVI.

All worldly joys go less
To the one joy of doing kindnesses.

Herbert.

IN all my foregoing perplexities I could think, I could image sequences, and follow to its utmost link a chain of pleasureable or painful contemplations; but now the threads of my ideas seemed cut asunder. To arrange my plan of conduct was impossible. I sat down at the window, fixed my eyes upon the roof of the opposite house, and remained for upwards of an hour with no idea, distinct or indistinct, but of the blue slate tiling it was covered with.

The opening of the chamber door brought back my consciousness of the solemn trial which impended—I turned eagerly—It was Katy, panting, and descanting on the folly of “building houses twenty stories high o’ purpose to take the breath out of a body. She hated stories of all sorts, and wished people wouldn’t be *scroogling* themselves up in a cock-loft hatching um, when dinner was upon the table.”

Dinner!—the every day things of life had passed away. I followed Katy, who kept up an incessant grumble till we reached the dining room. Helen and my aunt were seated at the table, apparently with less appetite for food than meditation. I dared not look at Helen; a beam of joy from her expressive eyes would have annihilated the little self-possession I had left; my aunt’s countenance I *could* examine; I should have been glad to see a ray of joy from that—but a single glance informed me she had been weeping.

Fitzgerald was not well, she replied to my look of apprehension; she must go back immediately, and would remain at the prison all night. Helen and I need not be downcast;

there was nothing to alarm us; but she could not bear to eat; the very sight of dainties made her ill; Mrs. Green was bent on killing her; but for us she would remove entirely to the jail. Her tone was querulous for the first time since our date of sorrow.

How glorious I should now have been in the revealment of my morning's treaty, but for the terrible fear that Helen had consented; that I should be forced upon a task I felt was over heavy for my strength.—What!—I tell a sister so high-souled in her very lowliness, that we were co-heirs of fatuity or madness!—Should I be justified in such a disclosure?—The divulgement of an oracle had often brought about its own fulfilment. For a moment I listened to the suggestions of cowardly self-love—"Be silent—let them marry"—it was only for a moment.

While these reflections occupied me, Helen was soothing and remonstrating. I checked the current of my thoughts to note her voice—did it tremble?—did it imply the agitation of repressed delight?—No, it was, as always, clear, low, and musical; not more subdued than ordi-

nary, not less firm. My aunt, declaring that an unaccountable depression made every thing look black, embraced us, refused my attendance to the prison, bade us sleep soundly, and not wait breakfast for her.

We were left alone ; Helen kept her eyes fixed upon the door until Katy had received her string of injunctions to make the children comfortable, until my aunt had reached the stair-foot, nay, until the clatter of her pattens re-echoed from the pavement. Day-light was withdrawing ; the fire-light was partial ; I could not well interpret Helen's countenance ; but when the sounds grew faint, with a burst of emotion I thought her incapable of giving way to, she flung herself into my arms—"How could you wear a face to cheat me Walter ?—How could you look so solemn ?—the time was unfit for jest. I figured all horrible calamities—Marion had relapsed—you had 'quarrelled with Lord Sanford, and then—"

"And then," said I.

"And then to hear the actual wonder !—I was so astonished !—were you astonished ?—was it amazement made you look so pale ?—It

seemed impossible ; it seems now impossible—My uncle liberated—our home restored—*you*, you Walter, and my aunt, my poor, poor aunt, enjoying without remorse her former comforts, and the free healthful air she almost blames herself for breathing !”—She paused to dash away her tears.—“Walter, when Marion spoke of all these happy changes I doubted them, I bade myself not be too sanguine ; even before you spoke I saw Lord Sanford was not to be trusted ; but Mr. Fielding is, I feel he is ; the letter of that good Sir William is written on my heart !”

“You can remember its whole import, Helen ?”

“Every sentence—every word !—At first I was appalled ; I doubted my resemblance to his portrait of a daughter, but I could not doubt our friend’s assurances—Our friend !—Yes, I loved him as our friend, but I never dreamed that he was dearer.”

“And is he then, so very dear, Helen ?”

“Thank Heaven, he is—Oh, Walter ! to feel that I can truly love him ; that he loves me so truly ; to hear his generous projects for you

all!"—She fell back upon her chair, weeping violently.

I was thankful she did not see my face; I felt the blood forsaking it—"Helen," said I, "my dear, dear Helen! will you forgive me? I should have—"

"Forgive you; indeed I do: I blamed you for a little while—no more—the jest was like those Marion was so fond of in our merry days. Think of our return to the glen, Walter!—think of our visits to that kind-hearted Sir William Fielding!—think of the delight of making others weep with thankfulness!—Our old retainers—our little school—how the young things cried and clung to me!—Ah!—we shall laugh at Grace—Do you remember her telling us just before the boat pushed off that she had a *feel* we should not meet again?—that Marion's *wraith* was in the mist?—Walter I wish I did not feel so happy. Granny's superstitions come before me—'the seaman trembles when the bright, bright scud drifts through the cloudy sky,' she used to say."

"Helen," I gasped: it is too much: my head—my head!"

I dragged myself towards the door ; she flew to support me, chiding herself for inadvertence—Fielding had cautioned her : but it was such a trial to restrain her joy before our aunt ; she would talk of other matters if she could ; she would read to me ; she would do any thing if I would not wear that cold, melancholy look. I tried to evade her searching eye ; she snatched my hand from my forehead—“ Walter, there *is* something dreadful, there *is*—You *have* quarrelled with Lord Sanford ?”

“ Indeed, no,” said I,—“ ’tis nothing new—it is—it is nothing at all Helen, nothing at all.”—Heaven forgive the falsehood !—she had clung to me so piteously !

Katy entered with lights ; she arranged the table, looked at us both, and shook her head. Without a word being said, she stirred the fire and handed me a book—a novel circumstance, for Katy was not fond of books. She took a tray from Mrs. Green, poured out tea, trimmed the candles, gave us another pitying look, and left us.

Helen began to speak of trivial matters. I

grew more composed. She took the volume (it was Polybius,) and entered at once upon the Punic wars. Books and the evening tale had once been my mind's resting-places—but now!—Still I was glad she read, for I could ponder, I could arraign myself—how sharply!—Reflection brought with it the fact that by my weak procrastination I had exposed her to a test too harsh, perhaps, for woman's fortitude; clinging to a futile hope I had kept back a disclosure which had it been promptly made to Fielding, Helen had been preserved—until this evening I had not suspected the full force of that sensibility repressed by her extraordinary self-command. Her feelings were as keen as Marion's, and I was about to torture every fibre, to efface the glowing picture she had sketched, and substitute a canvass dark with hurricane and thunder-cloud!—I must do this or burden my poor, sick uncle with the terrible disclosure. “It must come,” I exclaimed; “Helen, it must come!”

She laid down the book and viewed me earnestly—“You are feverish, you must sleep—

you must promise to sleep if you wish *me* to sleep." She led me from the room with that affectionate force which is resistless.

I obeyed her—Yes, she should sleep—that night at least she should sleep with the visions of the blessed—I feigned drowsiness when she entered my room—she left me with a fond 'good night,' and I felt the gloom of death fall on me!

Oh, how I struggled through that dreadful night! morning broke, and still I quailed at the mere thought of burdening Helen with my fatal secret—I would again revolve every method of escape—one hitherto unthought of suddenly occurred, a painful one, but comparatively with others it appeared consoling. I would throw myself upon the generosity of Fielding; I would confess the culpable weakness which had prevented a timely disclosure; he would keep the secret from Helen; he would tell her that an unlooked for obstacle had intervened.—But would it be just to test human virtue thus, to ask my noble friend to wear the semblance of a capricious, heartless waverer? Could Fielding consent to place himself in this degraded light? and if he could, how would he

look upon the coward who had forced him into so cruel a position?

I was tolerably successful in feigning cheerfulness when I met Helen at breakfast—She seemed determined to consider the exciting subject of the previous evening as interdicted for a period; but there was a spirit, a tone of exhilaration in all she said which manifested her complete security—She recalled to me a picture, Fielding had once shewn me, of a child busily stringing a chain of flowers while a glaring snake reared its angry crest from the flower-bed.

A message from the prison had somewhat reassured us—my uncle hoped he would be well enough to see us after noon—Helen suggested visiting Quinilla in the interval—"For aunt's sake we should overlook her petulance, and Mrs. Bullock has been so friendly."

This remark revived my yesterday's adventure; the present crisis was so fearful that I could not think upon resources for the future, however necessary; but as a reason for my avoiding this second visit I briefly imparted the arrangements I had made with our good-tempered acquaint-

ance—Helen listened with attention, and observed that we must remain in a dilemma for a short time, as we could not prematurely declare the cause of my withdrawing from my tutorship, concluding thus—“Quinilla has some good traits you must acknowledge Walter; she thought more of us than you suspected; 'tis a pity that she is so irritable.”

“And so domineering and conceited,” I rejoined, “and so insolent to Marion.”

“Marion always retorts most provokingly, you recollect,” said Helen.

“Master Walter, Master Walter, just look out o’ the window Sir!” Slauveen rushed into the room—“Look at Lanty Maw driving the green elegant bran-new jaunting car, and Master Dionysius with the yellow cushions—hurry Sir—Lanty looks uncommon well!”—Slauveen had put off his reserve with his powder and silk stockings—For the first time in my life I was glad to hear Quinilla’s voice.

“Come for me in half an hour Dionysius—we’ll take an airing round the ring.”

“’Tis the wedding ring she’s drivin’ for,” said Slauveen; “but she’s like dust drivin’

every where!—Down she jumps—off the car—up the stairs, three at a stride—She's in full swing Miss Helen—if she catches me 'twill ruin her good-humour"—He shot behind the door: our cousin entered with a flourish—Slauveen slid behind her back, and exit.

“ So Helen, so Watty, I thought my *Lord* and *Lady* would leave you in the lurch; I'll lay you what you like he's an impostor!—well *for* you, you had a friend in the corner; I can do any thing with the Bullocks why! Mrs. B. praised you to the skies Watty; she calls you downright handsome—I wonder where she found your beauty: you were always thought so shocking plain!—I don't look blouzy, do I Helen?—Monimia too declares you have sweet eyes—Monimia is a fortune I can tell you—if you mind your hits—who knows!—We had a party last night—no cards; a concert—I wore my amber jacket—such music! two phil-harmonics!—and my bugle petticoat—one brought his flute, the other something like a great big fiddle; it might be a bassoon—Monimia sang ‘*Spirits* of my sainted Sire! she played Mozart too, a new march or something that way—

They may invite you to a party Helen; if I were you I wouldn't go; dress is so expensive—Just put a pin in my pad—am I spattered?"

Time was when her pell-mell gabble would have worried me, but now it was a relief; it brought me from distracting ruminations on the trials to which noble minds are subjected, into collision with every day people. Our cousin, recommenced her sputtering cantabile. "I'm in such spirits Helen!—quite a conquest Mrs. Bullock says—you must keep it a dead secret for—Who's this I wonder?—there's a rap!—are you at home?—Somebody is coming up-stairs; shall I peep:—'tis a lady in an elegant pelisse and quite a London hat."

Marion entered; she nodded carelessly at our cousin, whose visage became streaked with purple.

"Did you come alone?" said Helen, viewing her sister with delight.

"Alone?—no; but Lord Sanford heard that *you* were not alone, so he left me."

"His absence is good company," exclaimed Quinilla, tossing her head.

Marion took no other notice of this exquisite

remark than by turning more directly to her sister—"We have been furnishing our castle, Helen: the state-rooms shall be wainscotted with oak, and fitted up in your old legendary style. Sanford has some drawings of antique chairs and couches, with carvings of curious monsters—Walter will adore them! The grand saloon is to be hung with crimson damask, the library with crimson velvet—then there are mirrors, marbles, and candelabra. How delicious it will be to listen to your legends through the long winter evenings in a *real* castle Helen!—Yet I know that I shall always like the cottage best."

Quinilla honored this effusion sometimes with a gosling stare, sometimes with a forced titter, indicative of scornful incredulity; but I could perceive, by the tint of her complexion, an ominous drawing in of her lips, and a drumming with her fingers, that the virus was at work. The elegant pelisse, the London hat, the furniture, had swallowed her good humour inch by inch, and left her in a blaze of rancour. When Marion ceased she laughed contemptuously—In *her* opinion her *Ladyship* before she

built a castle should build an hospital to hold her poor relations.

“Are *you* so poor then Miss O’Toole?” said Marion.

The rebuff had awful consequences—“Audacious minx!—upstart! the ditto of her impertinent, impostor husband!”—A torrent of abusive epithets descended upon Marion, who, in her old playfully provoking manner, by cool retorts set our cousin’s blood in typhus ferment.

“I wonder you will class yourself with upstarts Miss O’Toole: you call yourself our cousin through mere courtesy: we are not related. Lord Sanford says that, in consideration of your age, you should rather call yourself our aunt.”

Marion had sown mischief and she reaped it. Some stronger epithet than furious must be invented to typify Quinilla’s state of mind. She glared around, as if adjuring the walls to witness this surpassing insult. I felt a presentiment of evil, but I could not turn aside the whirlwind. Quinilla’s throat became compressed; hoarse, disjointed sentences were gurgled forth—“Pauper—outcast—brought up on cha-

rity—aunt—age—lord—humbug—*lady*—cousin—pay for it—”

At last she became choked ; she sat down, took breath, and seemed to collect herself for some decisive blow—“ *You,*” she resumed, “ *you* to dare insult a girl of my consequence ! What *are* you all ?—Beggars the whole *tote* of you but for my wise sister !—Aye, you may laugh, *my lady* : they have a right to sneer whose father was as good as hanged and whose mother died in a mad-house !”

Her auditors were mute ; she proceeded with the vulgar bitterness of wounded self-conceit—“ Why don’t you laugh now ?—Your mother ! aye and all *her* mother’s family root and branch died mad—cousin by courtesy am I !—certainly I claim relationship with a superior stock !—a pack of lack-witted grandees !—No wonder you look down on the O’Tooles—didn’t your mother’s father leave his daughter to a convent ?—what was that for ?—they were wise men, very wise, who married her and you !”

“ The jaunting-car is at the door ma’am,” said Mrs. Green, entering and curtsying to Quinilla.

“ Oh! Mrs. Green, I’ll go immediately ;—thank you Mrs. Green ; it’s well in my way indeed to put myself into a passion, and to plague myself to death for such a set !”

“ Detestable creature !” exclaimed Marion, looking after her with that wild eye-flash which once before had made me quiver. “ If I had believed a syllable of her horrid story I should have fallen dead ! but I know her vindictive spirit, I know her falsehood—Our mother !—my husband an impostor !—’Tis all alike ; all the fabrication of her wicked brain !—You remember Walter her stories of Lord Sanford ?—our mother !—false creature !—What a tale it was to forge—in one instant too !—oh I do so hate her !”

“ Marion !” The beseeching agony of this ejaculation went to my inmost soul.

“ There, there,” said Marion, embracing her sister ; “ there Helen, I will not say another word of her—Look at me Helen ; look at me ; indeed I wo’n’t—Take away that handkerchief : if she trample me I will not say I hate her any more ; let me only see your face Helen.”

“ She is terrified,” said I ; “ this violence is

too much for her." I was leading Helen from the room when Lord Sanford's carriage was announced.

"Wo'n't you say one word Helen?—wo'n't you say one word before I go?"

"God bless you!" faltered Helen.

"May I stay with you a little longer?—*May* I stay Walter?"

"No, no," said I,

"Then I will come this evening certainly; there will be no danger of meeting with that hateful creature."

CHAPTER XVII.

“ A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, to command ;
And yet a spirit still and bright,
With something of an angel light.”

HELEN stood motionless, her face still covered, until the carriage drove away ; she removed the handkerchief, “ you are dying Helen,” I exclaimed ;—she was so deadly pale that I feared to leave her for assistance ;—“ Oh Helen forgive me.”

“ It is true then—and you knew it ?”

I groaned.

“ Is it all true—all !—Well, well, ’tis very well ; my head is giddy ; let me sit down :—

Walter,"—she looked in my face with an expression of calm, cureless anguish:—"Walter my heart is broken."

"Oh Helen, Helen," I exclaimed, "will you kill me?"

She fell upon her knees, burying her face in the sofa-cushion; after some moments she arose and looked at me intently; her countenance gradually assumed an air of stern sorrow.

"Why were you silent brother? you might well have looked heart-stricken, did you intend?—you could not intend to deceive—"

"Helen!—deceive! recollect my struggles of last night: they were not the struggles of a villain. I ought to have spoken sooner: I ought to have prevented my poor friend's declaration: I meant to keep *you* in ignorance, and to disclose every thing to Fielding this very day."

"Would that have been generous think you;" exclaimed Helen; "to burden him *alone*; I thank Heaven, I *do* thank Heaven for the accident by which he has escaped! it would have been a fatal error! Feel no remorse Walter: I am grateful to you for my little hour of hap-

piness—such happiness ! Our best friends are spared brother : I could not have hid my joy to day : I must have told my poor aunt something.”

“She will discover that something terrible has happened,” said I ; “ your face is death-like.”

“ She shall not ;—rely on me that she shall not.—Sit here Walter, sit close to me, and tell me the ‘ every thing ’ you would have told.”—Tears and sobs burst forth at last ; but tears cut not to the heart so keenly as the dried up eye ; the chill, hopeless look.

“ Now Walter,” resumed Helen, “ now you may begin.”

I collected myself and briefly imparted the record I had woven, from mutilated indexes, of my mother’s story ; touching lightly on my last interview with Madame Wallenberg, the circumstances of which were in themselves a sufficient evidence of our relationship to her, and of the invariable recurrence of that hereditary affliction in my mother’s family which justified those censures the Baroness had passed upon herself for consenting to the marriage of her niece ; I described my horror when the

mystery was suddenly developed by Marion's derangement, and finally I recounted the sequel of Julia Derentsi's story which my aunt, unwittingly, had revealed on the day of Lord Sanford's dismissal.

"There is not an opening for doubt," said Helen, sighing heavily, "I now understand my aunt's resolute rejection of Lord Sanford; the inconsistencies and ambiguous expressions of Madame Wallenberg also are explained. I, too, Walter, used to meditate and wonder; there was something enigmatical I saw, but this awful solution was as remote from my thoughts as that the joy of yesterday would flit away so soon." She shuddered;—"Our father's fate I considered a sufficient-cause for my uncle's giving up the world, and the rank which was his birth-right; as that fate however had been the consequence of errors originating in mistaken judgment, it had added no sense of degradation to my grief for our family misfortunes: but my mother! innocent, yet branding her unhappy offspring!"—Helen again burst into a passion of tears: still, her sense of humiliation seemed soothed as she expatiated on

the virtues which my aunt's simple eloquence had so feelingly extolled. It seemed as if she would blot out the unmerited stigma with the tears which the record of her mother's blameless life and sufferings drew forth.

"My mother like Marion might have been ignorant of this fatal inheritance," resumed Helen; "poor Marion! thank God she had not our responsibility! thank God!"

Helen seldom broke into ejaculation, never called upon that name she now so fervently apostrophized without a prostration of every feeling to the veneration which inspired her address; a celestial calm seemed breathed into her soul, a pure and bright elation at being called on to fulfil a heavenly fiat—"Do you remember Walter," she continued, "that singular conversation in the study? do you remember my aunt's remark upon the law which parted the leper from his fellow creatures?"

"I remember it well," I replied, "even then I had a glimmering idea that we were of the cast-aways she alluded to."

"We are cast-aways Walter, but we are not criminal: the spring-time of our mortality is

gone ; we have no *home* here, but we have solemn duties to perform for those who have watched over us for many years with anxiety and trembling : to day we may indulge in tears, but to-morrow we must turn us to labour without bitterness of heart, and fix our hopes upon that *home* where the lost and darkened intellect shall be restored." She paused—I could not reply—"We must be resolute, Walter, for I have learned that employment may ward off—let us not speak of it, let us not think of it—from this day let us never wring each other's hearts by complaint ; we will not bow down those who have fostered us—gay thoughts, bright hopes, are gone ; but we may, we *shall* acquire that serenity which leads to an eternal peace."

I looked at her with wonder ; the kindred spirit of Madame Wallenberg was discernible in the noble confidence of her young relative—But alas for human fortitude ! a breath upset poor Helen's, a voice was heard ; a light impatient step—" 'Tis Fielding !" said Helen, " must I see him ?—I can not—tell him—*will* you tell him ?" —She was darting from the room when Field-

ing entered—"Helen!" The muscles of her face trembled with agony:—"Helen!" repeated Fielding.

Her agitation encreased; she leaned against me; Fielding approached. She held out her hand and tried to smile; her agony became the more apparent.

"Your uncle—Lady Sanford?" stammered Fielding, retaining Helen's hand.

"They are well," said I, "Marion has been here; have you seen her? have you seen my uncle?"

"Walter you try me cruelly," said Fielding; "Helen will not keep me in suspense! my own Helen will not torture me." The intense affection which his looks and words betrayed, did not contribute to remove my perturbation.

"Were I not convinced that you are mine," continued Fielding, "I could not so patiently endure this silence Helen—but secure of that—quite secure—"

The low, tearless, sob which burst from my poor sister, and Fielding's abrupt recoil, completed the triumph of my weakness. I placed

Helen on the sofa, sat down near her and wept to keep my heart from bursting.

“ You have sufficiently prepared me,” said Fielding, gravely addressing himself to me ;—
“ be explicit now—a word will satisfy—is my contract with your sister broken ?”

“ It is.”

Fielding staggered back. “ Is it broken with her consent ?”

“ Yes.”

He seemed to collect himself, and said deliberately ; “ She was then mistaken in the nature of her sentiments for me ?”

“ No, Mr. Fielding, no,” said Helen, rising and approaching him ; “ I was not mistaken *there* ; but I thought I could go through this interview with firmness ; I thought my love for you, my deep unalterable affection would support me : I would have hid my anguish, indeed I would, if I had had a little time for preparation—I did not think you would be here so soon—that I should be forced to tell you so immediately—that—we must see each other no more.”

Fielding's face became as bloodless as her own—“’Tis some romantic scruple—I can remove it—your uncle—has he interfered? has Walter?” He looked at me sternly.

“Oh do not blame Walter,” said Helen, with reviving energy, “his secret was dearly kept—my uncle has *not* interfered—he knows nothing—he must know nothing—One moment—give me a moment;”—she pressed her forehead—The pause was awful—“Mr. Fielding you remember the night Lord Sanford was despaired of—you remember my drawing you from his chamber and leading you to Marion’s.”

Helen’s color came and went so swiftly that to save her from falling I stood near her. Fielding seemed unable to support himself; he sat down and appeared lost to every thing but Helen’s voice—she continued—

“I led you to my sister’s chamber—what did you behold? a human being bereft of reason—distorted features—imbecile fury—what did you hear? reviling! the jabber of the idiot! A few hours before and that abject creature was as perfect in intellect as I am now—and I!—I may be stricken in a moment as she was

then—as our mother was—our mother’s mother! there was insanity in her family, and its effects have been hitherto awful and invariable.”

Fielding’s countenance seemed too rigidly fixed to express emotion; he made no exclamation, but continued gazing at my sister with the earnest, cold monotony of features beaming from tapestry or canvass. Helen proceeded.

“Until this hour I was ignorant of our calamitous descent; none of us but Walter had penetrated the secret; it was veiled from us, no doubt with the most benevolent intention—Do not think that I relinquish my engagement because—”

“Relinquish!” echoed Fielding, “did you say relinquish?”

In an instant he was roused from torpor to passionate emotion—“Is it for my sake, Helen that you relinquish your engagement?” She made no reply.

“Had we been married you could not have cancelled it,” said Fielding, “and we were bound to each other before either of us was aware of this—”

“Interdict,” added Helen firmly. Fielding started.

“ You yourself have passed judgment on the neglectors of such intelligible warnings,” said I, advancing to Helen’s relief; “ you have reprobated the selfishness which extends and prolongs so stern a visitation; you forget that, since I became aware of Marion’s derangement, you and I have made the counteraction of this malady the subject of many discussions.”—

“ And you forget,” said Fielding, “ that I assured you it may be mitigated—subdued—even when inherent it may not be so constant in recurrence; time may blunt its malignity—may eradicate it.”

“ Mr. Fielding,” said Helen, “ be yourself; the shock of this discovery unsettles the fortitude of both of us. I am recovering mine; the time will come when you will wonder you opposed me. It may please Heaven to interpose its mercy; I do not despair: but could you be happy with such a calamity impending?—recall that night!—Would you live with the palsyng fear of beholding your wife a maniac! would your affection be proof against the vacant glare? the laugh of frenzy—”

“ It would,” interrupted Fielding; “ under

the most revolting aspect I would watch over you Helen ; I would remember the heroism of this moment, I would adore you in any—”

“ Hush, hush !” said Helen ; “ you could not, you could not.”—

“ What ! doubt the steadiness of my attachment !” She looked at him reproachfully.

“ Hear me, Helen ; the knowledge of your being liable to such a calamity, with the apprehension of your being subjected to brutality or ignorance, make the prospect of our separation more terrible to me than any fear of the evils you so coolly prophesy. I have studied the various aspects of insanity—shocked by the frightful abuses I discovered in its treatment—and I have often been successful in subduing it ; you sacrifice yourself and Walter to an over-excited sentiment of generosity. Are you justified in rejecting the means accorded you in peril ? and to what end ? to make him you would preserve supremely wretched.”

Helen seemed to waver ; she cast at me a glance of mingled terror and uncertainty. Fielding observed her as if his life hung on her decision, while faint and trembling she regard-

ed us alternately with an expression of the deepest tenderness; the issue hovered on a breath. Suddenly she seemed animated by some new thought—"Oh Mr. Fielding," she exclaimed, "you were noble and magnanimous till now; why will you persuade me to act against the principles you have advocated? it is you that are governed by over-excited feelings.—You have told me that nothing more than terror unsettles the intellect—solitary—or with my poor Walter, I can labor on patiently; the duties imposed by gratitude and affection will contribute to deaden the sense of our misfortune; we shall not be wretched while we see my dear aunt and uncle made comfortable by our exertions; employment, you have said, in cases of mental disturbance, is salutary, and we shall fly to it as a balm and a blessing; but were I your wife *fearfulness and shuddering* would fasten on me—my self-reverence gone—an object of perpetual and health-destroying watchfulness to the person I love far beyond myself—mistaking perhaps the perturbations of remorse for the noiseless step of an insidious disease."

“Reverse our positions,” cried Fielding, impetuously interrupting her, “let *me* be the denounced ! how would you act ?”

“I hope I should act as you will,” said Helen after a pause ; “I hope I should : but if I could not—is my weakness an excuse for yours ?”

“Helen, Helen ! you are too collected,” exclaimed Fielding, “let us part—it costs you nothing.”

“Only my earthly hopes,” said Helen, “and they are—nothing !” She turned her head away and said in a tremulous tone—“Alas ! if mothers visited as my poor mother was, could foresee the trials their children might be doomed to, how bitter would be their self-reproach ?”

These words had an electrical effect on Fielding. A rush of hitherto unthought of influences seemed all at once to master him : he leaned upon the table and buried his face in his hands : after a few moments he raised his head and said impressively, “Helen you have not answered me ; do you relinquish your engagement for my sake ?”

“For your sake,” said Helen,—“and for—your father’s.”

“But if my father still consent?”

“There may be others,” said Helen in broken accents, “whose consent you cannot ask:” she drew a letter from her bosom; “last night I read this letter many times; I pondered upon every line; I believed that I might prove the daughter your father wished for: I proposed to myself a lofty standard and I resolved to reach it—*can I?*” She unfolded the letter and read—“*Your mother was a poor gentlewoman, but she bequeathed more riches to her son, than all the wealth of both the Indies.*” She held the letter towards Fielding, and almost convulsed with grief continued to address him—“What should *I* bequeath? There are other passages as clear—but I have not voice to read them now—take back your father’s letter; I cannot be his daughter, but I will love you both as well, as wife and daughter ever loved a husband and a father!” She was leaving the room; Fielding started forward and caught her hand—“Forgive me Helen! it is all over: you will hear of me in the asylums of misery—farewell!”

He dropped her hand and she glided from the room.

Fielding stood like one entranced looking after her: I had been so utterly uncertain of the issue of this conference that I, too, gazed after Helen, almost expecting her return. The deep sighs of my unhappy friend aroused me: I drew near him—"Walter my poor Walter" he ejaculated; tears started to his eyes; "my poor Walter, I blamed you for many things: your conduct is vindicated now."

"You will not forsake us Fielding," said I, "you will write to us."

"Forsake you! it will be very difficult for me to place that distance between us which must make letters our only mode of intercourse—but I owe it to *her*: write unreservedly Walter: be explicit and minute."

"And you," said I, "you will return to us if"—I could not give utterance to the dreadful contingency that hung upon the *if*—

"Beware of such dangerous allusions," said Fielding—"support her—she will support you—I have prevailed upon Lord Sanford to return to the glen: I too hoped"—his voice faltered—

“I must break this event to my father in person—it will be keenly felt—for—*her* place will never be supplied.”

He pressed my hand as if unable to tear himself away.

“You will take leave at the prison,” said I, “how they will regret you Fielding! my poor aunt!”

“Kind, upright soul!” he ejaculated; “no one is above her in my esteem.” He approached the door and again stopped irresolute;—“No—I will not ask it—but tell her Walter that I shall love her with the love she merits.”

He left me—I never felt a drearier blank! a keener heart-ache!

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ O ! grief can give the blight of years,
The stony impress of the dead—
We looked farewell through blighting tears,
And then hope fled !”

A SUMMONS from the prison found me still standing where my regretted friend had left me. I stole to Helen's door and listened ; there was no breathing of complaint ; I determined to leave her undisturbed.

The prison Mercury, Neddy's little curly-pated heir, awaited me ; I envied the boy's riotous light-heartedness as he ran before me, diverging occasionally to dash his naked feet into every puddle he espied, in the very

wantonness of fun. The wind which bandied to and fro the corduroy strips that barely did the duty of a nether garment, was not more volant than his limbs, and yet he contrived never to exceed a certain distance in advance ; looking back at intervals to assure himself of my proximity. The urchin was so taking and so comical that I could not find it in my heart to rebuke him, or repress the laugh which shewed every pearl of his mouth whenever the passengers would jump aside to avoid the splashings he inflicted. At last he caught a pig as reckless as himself, and, with practised aim, sent it right between the legs of a prodigious dandy, who, in a sort of dancing gait, was making up to me : the upset was deplorable—the boy roared with a sympathy-compelling glee, tears bubbling down his rosy cheeks, while the pig kept squealing, the dandy kicking, and I kept rubbing with my pocket handkerchief a pair of bright green pantaloons exquisitely braided, and pouring forth apologies, indiscreet, because they revealed my connexion with the impish pig-decoyer. I had recognised the younger Dionysius (Dionysius was a patrony-

mic of the Bullock family.) “ ’Tis of no consequence at all at all,” cried he good-humoredly; “ don’t distress yourself; *you* couldn’t *help* the pig sure.”

“ Help the pig to throw you down !” said I, somewhat indignant; “ not I, indeed.”

At this the imp laughed until his breath failed, and, springing on the pig which he had held in clutch, they set off helter-skelter, howling and hurrooing and overthrowing all they met.

“ Do you know Monimia was served just such another trick on the South-mall one day,” said Dionysius; “ tumbled in a flash of lightning—a sow *skelped* through her petticoats !—there should be some law against these pigs Sir. But I was going with a message to you Mr. Fitzgerald; will you all drink tea with us this evening? my mother hopes you’re disengaged; so do I, I’m sure.”

I made excuses; my sister was not well: my aunt seldom left the prison.

“ I’m very sorry for it ’pon my honor an’ word I am,” said Dionysius, warmly; “ we asked Mr. Fielding and Lord and Lady Sanford

just o' purpose ; you'll come another time though ; may I call upon your sister Mr. Fitzgerald ?”

“ Not at present,” said I, eagerly, “ not to-day.”

“ Oh any day will do ; my mother says that you and she are *good* enough to teach us.”

His emphasis was so peculiar that I hardly could determine what meaning he attached to “ *good* enough to teach us,” so I wished him a good morning with an embarrassed air.

He seized my hand and shook it lovingly ; “ You had better begin soon though ; my brain is growing deuced stiff ; but I know I'll like to learn from you, for Miss .O'Toole says you're so easy. Good bye—but can't you come to us to-morrow why ?—do.”

I assented, and walked on with a heavy heart ; it seemed as if I possessed no sympathies in common with the people I was destined to live amongst : they were kind, nay friendly, but I felt they never could become to me what Fielding was, and that I must plod on wearily, yoked to unsuitable companions. My actual position had not changed since yesterday, but

the *animus* 'that led me along so light' had vanished: thoughts which the day before were traced with sun-beams, now were shadowed by eclipse; the dull sky, and humid atmosphere oppressed me.

I passed under the gloomy arch; the prison door opened and closed upon me: I followed Nabbs up stairs; he kept *wondering to the world* what had become of little Phil; Phil had never been called lazy-leg from the hour he had a leg.

I tried to force my looks to cheerfulness, but the scene I entered on absolved me from this constraint. My uncle lay half extended on the bed; Marion sat near him, fondling his wasted hand, and weeping bitterly; Lord Sanford, holding an open letter, was walking up and down the room, looking very grave; my aunt sat at the bed-foot, her face as grief-stricken as her husband's.

"Oh Walter pity me," cried Marion, "I am going away! I am going away this very moment."

The intelligence, and the burst of grief that followed it deprived me of power to reply.

“My brother is dangerously ill,” said Sanford, “I must set off instantly : this letter from Lady Dellival is most pressing : indeed it is peremptory ; he is my only brother Marion, you would not wish me to defer—”

“No, no, no,” sobbed Marion, “I’ll go at once if I don’t die at once.”

“My dear Marion,” said Lord Sanford, “you are going with your husband.”

“I know I ought not to feel as if my heart was shivered,” replied Marion, with still more passionate emotion ; “I know aunt loves her husband above all the world, but she loves *us* too : if I love you *best*, Lord Sanford, it is no harm surely, to love others also, and if it be a fault I cannot help it.” She threw herself beside my uncle—“To leave him in this dismal prison too,” she added, wringing her hands ; “look at him, he is not like my uncle ; look at his poor sunken eyes ; his hair was brown a little while ago—take him from this place Lord Sanford, take him from this place, and I’ll never say I care for him, or any one but you, whatever I may feel.”

She fell upon her knees grasping her hus-

band's hands and looking up to him with the most earnest expression of entreaty.

"My sweet Marion," said Lord Sanford, trying to raise her.

"No," said Marion, "I will not move until you promise ; *will* you promise ? *will* you."

"Come hither Marion," said my uncle.

"*Will* you take him from this place Lord Sanford ? I want no castle, only pay that man."

"You forget that we return soon my love ; in a month, or—less ; in that time every thing will be arranged. Mr. Fitzgerald understands."

"Yes Lord Sanford," said my uncle, slowly turning towards him. "I understand you perfectly ; and you Sir, understand me, I hope as perfectly : we need not discuss points fully comprehended—You are the husband of our child, by your own will and act—not ours—but treat her tenderly, remember she was the darling of many hearts ; protect her as you ought, and may God bless you !"

"And forgive you too !" rejoined my aunt, "and remember Sir," she added, trying to speak calmly, "remember you stole her from those who did not prize her for her beauty—If it be

the will of Heaven to rob her of the charms you love her for, bring her back to us; promise to do that—it is the only favor we would deign to ask you.”

Marion rose abruptly; she fixed her eyes upon her husband, the look was keen and troubled. “You pledged a solemn promise when I married you, Lord Sanford, to release my uncle—if I thought”—She sank upon the bed-side and gasped for breath.

“My dear, sweet, Marion,” said Lord Sanford, “you are too excitable! leave all these matters for the present—you will be ill my love.”

“I *am* ill,” cried Marion, “my head is hurt.”

We surrounded her, filled with consternation.

“Your uncle will be as he used to be, please God! when you come back darling,” said my aunt, trembling from head to foot.

“It will make me young again to see our Marion,” said my uncle, stilling the tremor of her fingers with his nerveless hand.

“Come Marion,” said I, “you wished to see Helen? will you see her now?”

“Bring her here,” said Marion, eagerly.

“bring her at once ; you cheat me, Helen tells the truth.”

The door opened at the moment and Fielding entered ; a glance at Marion was sufficient to explain the cause of our perturbation.

“Lady Sanford,” he exclaimed, taking her hand, “let me wish you joy ! I told you yesterday we were getting on at last—to day I have still better news—Your uncle is at liberty.”

“It is not true Sir,” said Marion.

“Here is the bond,” said Fielding, presenting a paper to Lord Sanford—“your carriage waits—it shall convey your uncle home this very moment if you wish it.”

“Then you have not deceived me after all,” said Marion, throwing her arms around her husband’s neck ; she sobbed hysterically, beseeching him to forgive her, and protesting she would go with him the minute, the very minute she saw her uncle outside that den.

My aunt cast a bewildered look at Fielding ; a ray of exalted satisfaction brightened his countenance.

“Now then,” said Marion, seizing her uncle’s hand, “we are ready—make haste—that intol-

erable weight is pressing on my forehead—this place is suffocating—come.”—My uncle drew back irresolute.

“The air is keen,” said Fielding; “you are an invalid, Sir; assist me, Walter.” We wrapped the cloak around him which my aunt hastily presented, and Fielding whispered, “I do not exaggerate the danger, Sir, she *must* be gratified or—”

“How you loiter!” said Marion, “come;” she drew my uncle’s arm within her own, hastening to the door; we followed.

Nabbs stood at the stair-head, patting the vagrant pig-bestrider; he pulled his forelock to salute the ‘masther,’—“I never thought my hospitable father’s son would be happy to turn out a gentleman your honor, and wish him never to darken his Hotel again; what changes come to people of our rank your honor! Phil, my prince, run down an’ tell your royal mother the quality are takin’ leave of our dominion—she’ll be sorry enough, whatever I may be, to lose her visitors; Misthiss Nabbs knows *rare* coppers from *raps* upon my credit.”

Mrs. Nabbs, however, was too backward in

her devoirs to suit Marion's impatience: Phil scraped his little foot, and held the door as wide as it would go, nodding to Fielding as if they were on terms of easy friendship; we helped my uncle into the carriage; Marion, dragging my aunt with her, was in a moment at his side; Sanford leaped upon the box, and I found myself arm in arm with Fielding, walking towards Mrs. Green's, internally questioning the reality of this event.

To thank such a man as Fielding was impossible; I pressed his arm—my heart was overflowing. We proceeded silently, until a forced cough drew our notice to little Phil, who was pattering behind us. "The prisoner boys be askin' to bid you a good bye," whimpered the child, looking up at Fielding ruefully; "they say you'll never come again; Dad says so too, but I say you will though; won't you now?"

"Yes."

"But when, I want to know; to-morrow it it?"

"To-day, go back and say so."

This little incident broke the spell which had kept us mute; Fielding enquired into the cause

of Marion's alarming excitement. I described the prison scene, dwelling sorrowfully on the urgent necessity for Lord Sanford's departure.

"Necessity!" said Fielding, in a tone of indignant doubt—"Alas! there is no point of upright principle by which one may lay hold of him! conscience cannot strike through the barrier of self-love—such a man will promise and unpromise in a breath."

Just then we reached our lodging; the door was open and Sanford's carriage waiting: we stopped, as by a mutual impulse, at the stair-foot—I figured to myself the scene now passing, "'Tis Helen's voice," said I.

"Make my adieus to my good old friends, Walter," said Fielding, "I cannot—it would unman me—Heaven bless you!"

He hurried away, for Lord Sanford was now descending the stairs with Marion; she rushed to me, but as suddenly drew back, giving her hand to her husband; "I have *promised* to go Walter, I will keep *my* promise too; kiss me my dear brother—kiss me; think of me, tell them all to think of me—bid Grace good bye for me—and poor blind Johnny—and the little ones—

when you sit beneath the alder-trees, Walter you'll talk of me—"

"My dear Marion," interrupted Lord Sanford, "why so solemn? you shall return my love."

"*Shall* I?" said Marion, with a mournful pathos no time can blot from my remembrance; Lord Sanford looked impatient; he unlocked my hand from hers—the carriage drove off rapidly.

END OF VOL II.

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